ANFIELD ROAD LATEST • KIT QUIZ • ACADEMY • VIRGIL VAN DIJK • ADRIAN'S NEW DEAL • SO LONG GINI

LIVERPOOL FC

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Production Editor Michael McGuinness
Design Colin Sumpter
Contributors Dave Ball, Ged Rea
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Published by Reach Sport Managing Director Steve Hanrahan Commercial Director Will Beedles Executive Art Editor Rick Cooke Executive Editor Paul Dove
Marketing & Communications Manager Claire Brown
Printed by William Gibbons
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THE ROAD AHEAD

Earlier this summer came the exciting news that Liverpool FC's Anfield Road Stand expansion had gained planning permission

This last year it's been tough enough imagining Anfield with a full house again. So what a tonic to think that soon, all being well, the ground will be not only packed to the rafters but bigger than ever before.

Liverpool City Council has now given the green light to the proposed redevelopment of the Anfield Road Stand, which will increase the stadium's overall capacity by around 7,000, up to more than 61,000.

As part of the application, the club has also been awarded permission to hold up to six concerts and major events at the stadium for a period of five years.

The Anfield Road plans were the subject of two stages of public consultation with local residents, businesses, fans and stakeholders. The first included the permanent closure of a small section of Anfield Road, in line with the original planning permission granted in 2014. After listening to feedback on this option, the club made changes to the plans.



The second stage was held in February 2020, where the club presented new and updated plans to keep Anfield Road open, with the road re-aligned around the footprint of the proposed expanded stand.

Andy Hughes, the club's managing director, says: "This is a huge milestone in our journey towards bringing more supporters into Anfield. We underwent a rigorous two-stage public consultation period during the planning process for this project and I would like to thank everyone who has offered a contribution to that.

"We have been clear from the beginning that this expansion would be based on our ability to successfully navigate the complex planning landscape; our ability to gain co-operation of local residents and the community; and our ability to ensure the project is financially viable.

"In what has been a very unpredictable year, we are seeking certainty in order to progress with this project and there are still some steps we need to take to get there."

Local residents and supporters will be continue to be updated on further developments.

Meanwhile the club has also announced the trial of temporary seats with safety rails in the Kop and Anfield Road lower tier, following a safety review by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA).

The review highlighted that during matches persistent standing in those two areas of the ground is an issue that needs to be addressed to ensure supporters' safety, particularly ahead of the return of live sport with spectators.

The SGSA's regulatory focus is on reducing persistent-standing risks in stadiums and avoiding potential crowd collapses, and research has shown that the installation of rails increases safety within all-seater stadiums.

Liverpool FC has had a management plan for persistent standing at Anfield for many years but following the SGSA review it is now advising to install safety rails.

In the trial, which will begin from the start of next season, around 1,800 new seats will be located in the back of the Kop and 6,000 in the Anfield Road Stand lower tier.




ANFIELD ROAD STAND
LIVERPOOL



It's important to note that Anfield will remain an all-seater stadium and the trialled areas are not 'safe standing' zones. They include normal stadium seats with an integrated safety rail behind them to avoid a crowd collapse, and they will not impact the visibility of the pitch for supporters.

The design is to enable fans to stand safely at key moments in the game, like goal celebrations, but must revert to a seat at other times.

Season-ticket holders whose seats are impacted by these changes will be contacted in due course to explain the changes and provide options to remain in the new seat or move to a standard seat.

With the installation of the new seats, LFC joins a number of Premier League clubs who are already using this safety method, with more set to install safety rails during the summer.

Andy Hughes adds: "The safety of our supporters when they come to Anfield is our absolute priority and we are fully committed to working with the SGSA on the trial of these new seats at Anfield.

"It is critical that we listen to the experts and deliver their recommendations to address this safety issue.

"We have informed key stakeholders and thank all fans for their input and support during this trial. We will complete a full review of the trial in 12 months at the end of next season."



Ali aiming to join elite GK union

Alisson Becker goes into the 2021/22 season aiming to become only the tenth Liverpool FC goalkeeper to keep 50 clean-sheets in league action for the Reds. The Brazilian, about to start his fourth season at Anfield, currently has 44 shut-outs on Premier League duty.



“Diogo makes us stronger”

Diogo Jota enjoyed a fine first season at Anfield and will be hoping to kick on again during 2021/22. The Portuguese forward has added plenty of flexibility to Jürgen Klopp’s attacking options and finished his debut campaign with 13 goals, including nine from 19 appearances in the Premier League. “He can play upfront in all three positions on a really high level,” says the boss. “He makes us stronger, which is really good.”







2021/22

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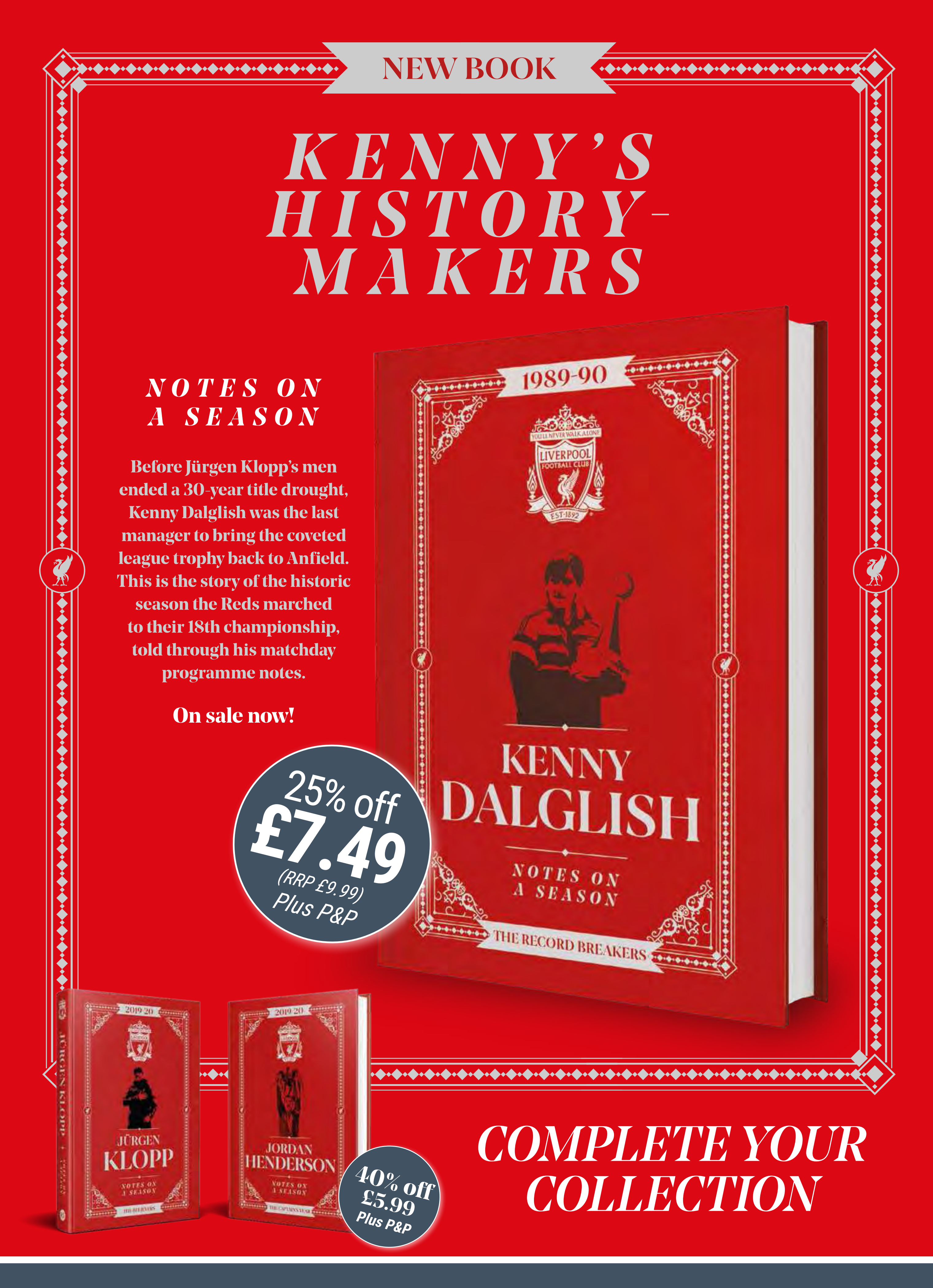
Mo ready to join PL 100 club

The good news for Reds fans around the globe is that Mohamed Salah has had a nice summer-break and is fresh to torment defences all over again. The attacker has 95 Premier League goals for Liverpool to date and his first target for 2021/22 will be to bring up the century. “I think 95 Premier League goals is a good number, especially in almost four years, and it’s something I’m proud of,” he says. “Hopefully I can get many more.”



Robbo setting the standards

Fresh from leading Scotland to their first tournament finals in 25 years and a memorable draw against England at Wembley, Andy Robertson is raring to go again with the Reds. "We don't think that we have any privileges because of the trophies we've won in the past," he stresses. "This team is determined to try and bring further success to Liverpool. It's about trying to get back to our best level or as close as we can."


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"Everybody knows his quality"

Thiago Alcantara received a glowing tribute from Spain manager Luis Enrique after helping his country to the semi-finals of EURO 2020. The Reds midfielder made four substitute appearances in Spain's run to the last four but Enrique told the media: "Thiago is a very good player. Everybody knows about his quality but we are a strong team. He's helping the squad a lot because he's an experienced player and we are very happy to have him in the squad."



Trent's positive progress

"Despite the disappointment of missing out on the Euros with a thigh injury, Reds right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold is staying positive. Speaking to the BBC during England's quarter-final win over Ukraine, he said: "Every day's a new step, every day's getting better, getting fitter and I think going into pre-season we'll be good. [I've had] a few weeks of rest and then [I'll be] hitting the season and trying to push on from there."





ON THE VIRG

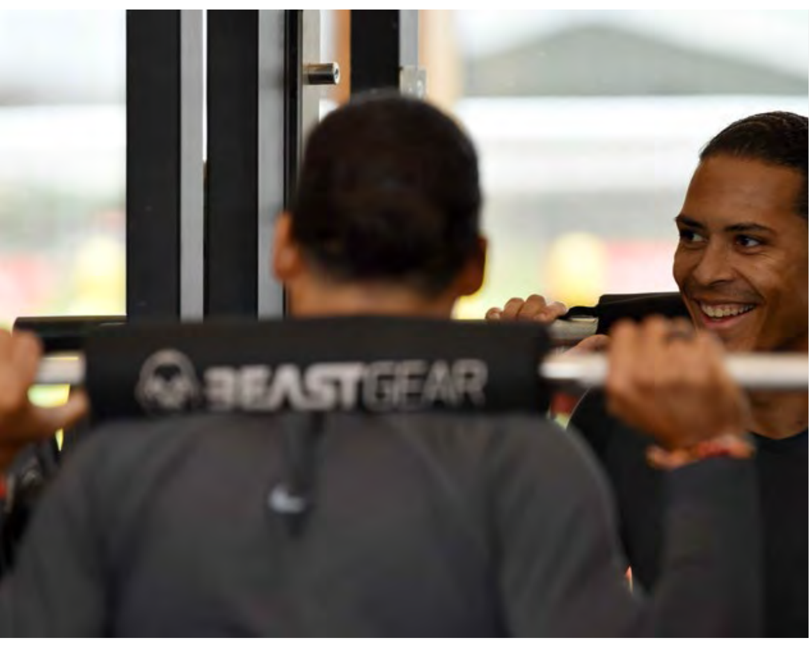
Virgil van Dijk has used the summer to continue his rehabilitation end-game, adopting a longer-term outlook ahead of a potentially huge 18 months for club and country

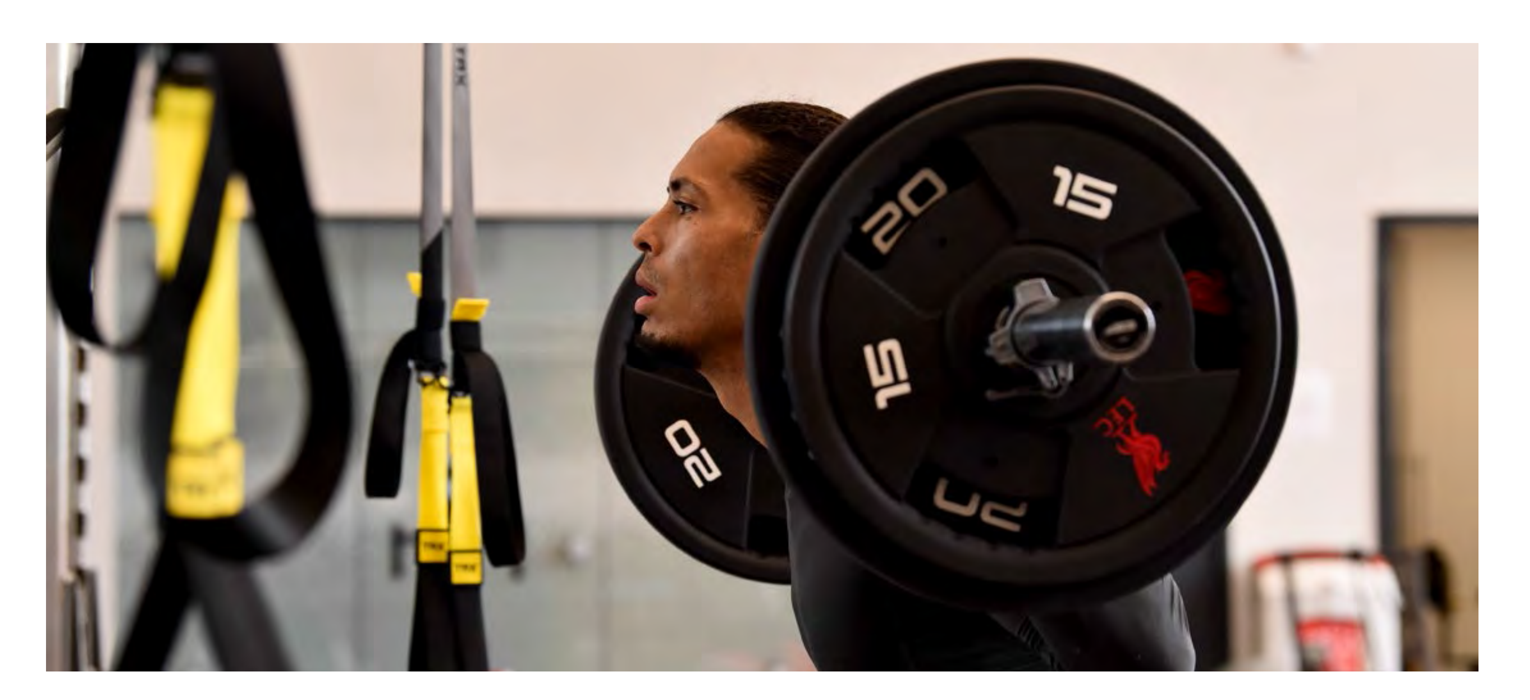
Ten months is a long time to watch other people doing the thing you love. But timing is everything in football, and for Virgil van Dijk, Liverpool FC and its army of supporters all over the world, patience has been key.

The centre-half, who turned 30 last month, was an anxious onlooker for three-quarters of the domestic 2020/21 season as the Reds addressed both his absence and that of defensive partners Joe Gomez and Joel Matip with youthful replacements and versatile deputies.

Then came the Euros and an off-pitch motivational role for the captain within the Netherlands camp while he continued his rehabilitation and his colleagues reached the last sixteen. Coach Frank De Boer described Virgil as “so important for the boys over the past few years – the team loves his presence.”




BEASTGEAR







Club boss Jürgen Klopp agreed that it was the right decision for Van Dijk not to return to action in the summer, even if it meant missing the chance of competing in a first major international tournament with the Netherlands.

"You cannot force it," said the Reds manager. "If you want to play a tournament, you have to train – proper football training weeks before, not a week before.

"You cannot, after ten or eleven months out, train a week and play football. That's just not possible.

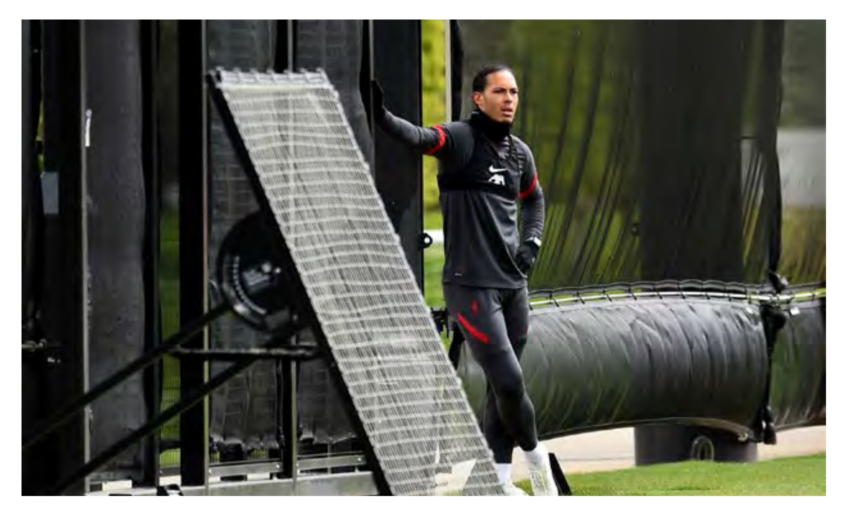
"He's trying to get fit as quick as possible, but in the end it's Virgil's decision and he will be massively influenced by the feeling in his knee."

Instead, there is an ongoing World Cup qualifying campaign to look forward to. The Netherlands are currently second in their group behind Turkey, with three matches played and seven to go. Next up, a trip to fourth-placed Norway on Wednesday 1 September, four days after Liverpool's Premier League home fixture with Chelsea and a fortnight before their first Champions League group game.

By which time, we all hope, Van Dijk will no longer be cheering from the stands but back where he belongs as a commanding presence in both the Reds and Dutch back-four.







It's been a long, hard road for VVD since suffering the ACL injury in his right knee in October 2020 – as it has for Gomez who picked up a tendon injury in his left knee while on England duty in November last year, then Matip who damaged ankle ligaments at the start of February.

But with setbacks comes solidarity, not just among players but from fans too. When the *Liverpool Echo* invited supporters to submit get-well-soon messages to Van Dijk in the aftermath of his injury, they were inundated by the response, while captain Jordan Henderson spoke for everyone when he told the club website that this was a moment "when you need to be there for each other.

"I'll be there as much as I possibly can for him," he continued. "I'm sure the lads will do the same and his family certainly will, to help him through the journey he'll go on.

"We've got to do everything we can to go and win as many games as we can for him. That's down to us as players to make sure that when he is back and he is fit, we're still fighting to be successful and fighting for trophies.

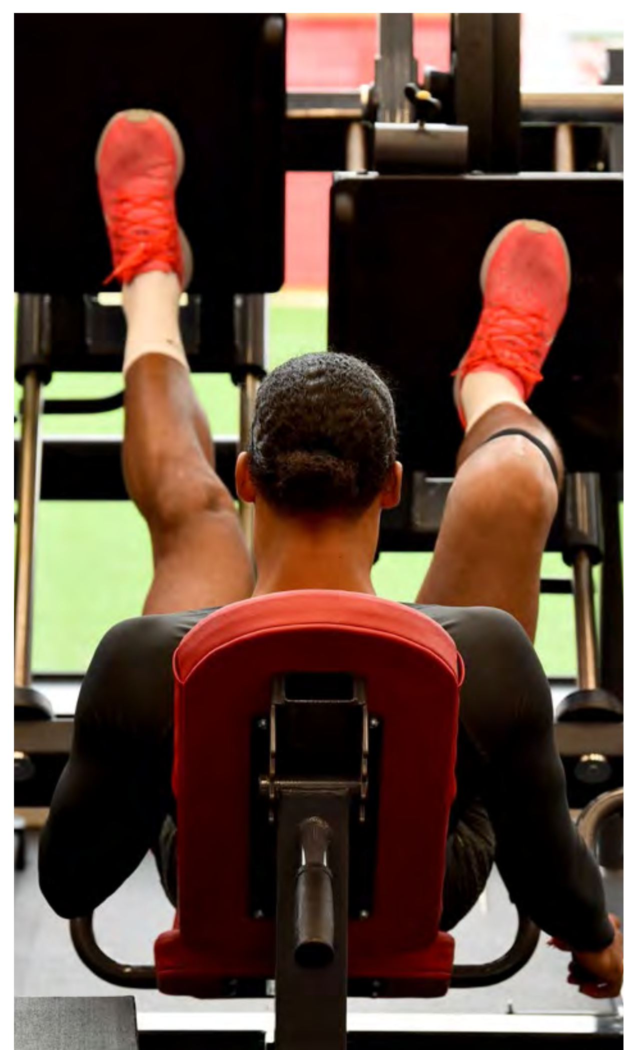
"You've got to use times like this to be stronger and to be even more together than we already are…and also stick by him and be there for him whenever he needs us.

"But he's a strong character, he's strong mentally and he certainly will be back stronger."

If anything Van Dijk and co's continued presence at the AXA Training Centre in Kirkby – working hard in the gym and physio rooms then transitioning to training outdoors – served to inspire and energise the playing side despite last season's myriad reversals of fortune.

With the end of the 2020/21 campaign in sight – in fact the day before what would be a sensational victory over Manchester






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United at Old Trafford – Virgil gave an exclusive interview to the club website. His message: "I'm on course for the start of pre-season."

By then he was entering the latter stages of his rehab programme, and this was his first interview since his original surgery. "I'm feeling positive and full of energy and I'm obviously working very hard," he revealed.

"It's been a very, very tough journey so far, but I am in a good place right now and I'm progressing nicely.

"For me to think about next season, with fans, myself to be playing again and hopefully having success with club and country, that's something to be excited about. I like challenges and this injury for me has been a massive challenge."

He spoke about missing the rescheduled Euros: "Obviously I am gutted not to be leading out my own country, but the decision to not go is the right one in the grand scheme of things [and] I'm at peace. It's the right thing to do, to stay a little bit more patient"

He had a message for Liverpool supporters who were excited to hear from him: "I am doing fine. I am in a good space mentally and physically. I can't wait to see fans in the stadiums and hopefully make them proud again."

And he thanked all those who stuck with him through the tough times: "My wife and kids, and also my team-mates, the manager, my physio – they have all been supportive.

"If I think back about the messages I've received, from all over the world and also from players I look up to, it has been very helpful in my rehab so far."

The last 18 months have shown that nothing can be taken for granted, and as Van Dijk says, "You never know in football and you never know in life. But the sun is going to be shining again [and] I will keep working no matter what. I am feeling very positive and ready to go. We'll see."

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Virgil's absence last season may have been LFC's longest, but several of his team-mates were struck by the 2020/21 injury hoodoo

Three senior centre-backs all out for several months. The skipper unavailable from February. Two new signings – a midfield maestro and an ace goalscorer – both missing for long spells. Other casualties at either end of the pitch and in the middle of the park.

Injury-wise, luck seemed to desert Liverpool throughout season 2020/21, which makes their late, great charge for a Champions League place all the more remarkable.

As late as Saturday 8 May the Reds were without ten first-team players for the home fixture with Southampton.

The home bench that day included Billy Koumetio, who'd made only one senior appearance, while Ben Woodburn was back in the matchday squad after a two-year absence.

In contrast, top-four rivals Chelsea, Leicester City and West Ham United had only 12 absentees between them.

A *Liverpool Echo* piece reported that "almost an eighth of the 86 Premier League players who are currently unavailable for one reason or another belong to Liverpool."

It added: "A total of 23 [LFC] players have missed at least one game thanks to injury or illness in 2020/21, and they have collectively suffered from 52 separate absences as many of



them have been in and out of the side.

"This adds up to a remarkable 308 matches for which this group has been unavailable. As Liverpool have played 48 games so far in 2020/21, that's the equivalent of six players being out for entire campaign and there still being further injuries on top."

TRENT ALEXANDER-ARNOLD

Trent pulled up during the draw at Manchester City in November and was out for the next month with a thigh injury. Then came June's freak mishap at the very end of England's pre-Euros friendly against Austria at Wembley.

ALISSON BECKER

In late November the Reds no1 suffered a hamstring injury and missed three subsequent games. He was back between the posts for the draw with Fulham at Craven Cottage.

CAOIMHIN KELLEHER

In March the Irish goalkeeper missed an international call-up to the Republic of Ireland squad due to an abdominal tear. He didn't feature for the Reds for the rest of the season.




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JOE GOMEZ

Joe's knee injury with England ruled him out from the start of December through to June this year. Reds manager Jürgen Klopp remarked: "Will he be available this season? When does the season end – May? I'd be surprised if he's back, to be honest." Gomez tweeted: "Taking it a day at a time but giving it my all… There is no education like adversity."

VIRGIL VAN DIJK

In only the fifth game of the Premier League season – the Merseyside derby at Goodison – VVD suffered the ACL injury that would curtail his campaign. "I don't want to say that's absolutely impossible [that he will play again this season] but it's not likely," said the boss.

JOEL MATIP



The German-born centre-half had a muscle issue in the first half of the season, then sustained a season-ending ankle-ligament injury against Spurs in the new year, making a brilliant, goal-saving interception. It prompted the Reds to sign two centre-backs in the transfer window.

NAT PHILLIPS

Having begun to establish himself in central defence, Nat was out of action for over three weeks over April and May 2021 with a hamstring issue but returned to help the Reds to third spot.

KOSTAS TSIMIKAS

The Greek left-back faced a similar lay-off to Diogo Jota, with both injured in the Champions League home group game with FC Midtjylland in December.

THIAGO ALCANTARA

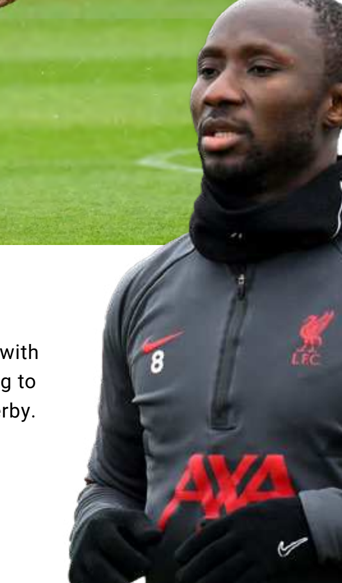
The classy midfielder's debut season had hardly got going when he contracted COVID then returned to action only to injure his knee in a challenge during the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park. He was back on the pitch in the new year.

JORDAN HENDERSON

In February the captain came off in the Merseyside derby at Anfield with a groin injury which required adductor surgery. He was on the bench for the final game of the season, at home to Crystal Palace, and back in England action at the Euros.



NABY KEITA



The Guinean midfielder endured an extended spell on the sidelines with a hamstring problem, returning to the bench for the Anfield derby.



FABINHO

The midfield enforcer was drafted back into central defence several times during the season but injured his hamstring in November and sustained muscle damage in February.

ALEX OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN

A knee problem kept The Ox sidelined from September through to December. His tough breaks with injuries made that goal at Burnley in May all the more enjoyable.

CURTIS JONES

During the business-end of the season, the talented local lad was absent for three matches due to a muscle complaint.

DIOGO JOTA

On fire in front of goal when he hurt his knee in the Champions League against FC Midtjylland. After three months he was back in business, but a foot injury in the important win at Manchester United left manager Klopp admitting: "Not too serious but serious enough to end the season – that's it."

XHERDAN SHAQIRI

A muscle injury sustained in November kept the 'Power Cube' at bay. "It's normal if you are injured and cannot help the team that you are frustrated," he said at the time. "You are at home looking at your team-mates on the TV and you want to be there too. But this is part of football, part of life."

ROBERTO FIRMINO

Bobby missed three matches prior to the March international break with a knock, but he was soon back and banging in two wonderful goals in the 4-2 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford.

JAMES MILNER

The midfield warrior was laid off for a while with a hamstring problem in December and had to exit the match against Leicester City in February…not that it was going to curb his game-time as the season entered its stirring finale.

DIVOCK ORIGI

The talismanic striker's season was thwarted by a hamstring issue, limiting him to just 182 minutes for Liverpool in the Premier League across 2020/21.



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'I can kick on at Anfield'
'It's a massive club and we've seen over the last few months how good they are. So I'm just coming here to learn and try to improve my game and I'm sure that along the way there will be a lot of happy memories'



ONE SUMMER

Continuing our celebration of the skipper's decade at Anfield, here's how the official club magazine – then a weekly – reported his arrival in June 2011, plus a look back at his first interview with the publication!

'HOW THE BOY WHO NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT BECAME AN ENGLAND STAR'

All of this feature is taken from the weekly Liverpool FC magazine when a very youthful-looking Jordan Henderson joined the club in 2011. It began with the above headline, and it continued like this…

Jordan Henderson, aged 20, is now a Liverpool midfielder of international repute. Seemingly, the future can be his. A path to the top, though, has not been without sacrifice. At 16, the outlook was anything but certain.

"When the club was considering whether to give me a professional contract, it was touch and go," Henderson said before making his England debut against France last November [2009].

"I was skinny and gangly but I kept working. They took a chance on me. I said I would repay the club; go to the gym, work on my upper body. I think they saw that side of me, that I was determined to be a player."

The last to be accepted in that year's intake, Henderson was physically behind others of his age. "But he was reluctant to be put on a lesser programme," Ged McNamee, Sunderland's academy manager,

REDS LAND

HENDERSON

'Youngster is in the right place t



MARTYN MCFADDEN

FAN'S VIEW

(FROM SUNDERLAND FANZINE ***A LOVE SUPREME***)

I'VE watched Jordan Henderson progress through the ranks at Sunderland. When the U18s reached the semi-finals of the 2008 Youth Cup, knocking Liverpool out along the way, he and Jack Colbeck - another youngster who has featured for the first-team recently - were the most impressive players.

A year later both were part of the first-team squad for the 09/10 pre-season Amsterdam tournament. I think the idea was for each of them to play in one of the games in Holland. In the end though Colbeck picked up a knock, meaning Henderson played in both.

Steve Bruce had just taken over that summer and he was obviously impressed by what he saw.

When the Premier League began Henderson was part of the squad and played very well, despite having just turned 19.

Energetic and dynamic, he has the ability and hunger to get around the pitch. That quality may come from the fact that his mother runs fitness classes and used to drag him along to them when he was a kid.

His appetite for the game was demonstrated whenever Bruce suggested he might rest him. Henderson's response was usually to train harder or tell the manager he wasn't tired.

Henderson's passing is also a strength; he is good at retaining possession and won't try to force a pass if there is nothing on.

With those assets it's no surprise that he can fill different positions in midfield. At various times under Bruce he operated as either a central midfielder or a right-winger. I also believe he could do a job at right-back in an attacking team, although he would need to concentrate more on his defensive duties.

When he has played on the flank he's done well. Although not lightning fast, he is deceptively quick. He's also good at bustling past defenders or nutmegging them. His crossing ability from deep or nearer the by-line is also effective.

Temperament is another strength. Henderson looks like he can handle himself when



Henderson performed well in Sunderland's win at Chelsea last season

'Top four clubs all enquired about Jordan'



SIMON BIRD

JOURNALIST'S VIEW (DAILY MIRROR)

LIVERPOOL have done very well to sign Jordan Henderson. Steve Bruce told the media in the north east that Sunderland had informal approaches about Jordan from all the teams in the top four. Apparently as soon as he burst onto the scene two years ago that started happening.

Bruce himself wasn't aware of Henderson when he became manager at the start of 2009/10. During pre-season that quickly changed as he said there was one kid who really impressed him, that was Jordan.

Since then he's been almost an ever present in the side and not many players of his age have so much experience in the Premier League.

His main attribute is his energy, his Pro-zone stats illustrate that. Bruce used to call him his marathon man because he'd regularly cover 13 or 14km in 90 minutes. When he's on form he gallops around and runs the game.

He was at the peak of his form in November when Fabio Capello called him up. Sunderland had a terrific start to the season and Jordan was one of the reasons for that. He's admitted the international against France didn't go brilliantly. I would suggest that's because he was played out of position.

In the middle of the season Sunderland's results dipped alarmingly and that was a difficult time. He took some criticism from fans. I couldn't understand that because he was a local lad who was clearly trying his best. He's a strong character and overcame it.

Bruce said he wanted to rest him but injuries meant he couldn't. He did eventually. Jordan's response was to be the best player in training the following week and the manager admitted he had no choice but to put him straight back in the side.

He's a grounded lad who is close to his family and friends. His mates are Sunderland supporters and they'd give him plenty of stick if he played badly.

I'm sure the presence of Kenny Dalglish has been a big factor in this move. As a young player you know he will treat you right and have a defined role for you.

His best role is just to the right of centre. In a 4-2-3-1 formation he could play in the two, or operate well as one of the more advanced three. He's very capable of providing Andy Carroll with decent service.

As soon as you find out a club like Liverpool are interested you have to seize the moment. Jordan's done that and he's got the appetite for hard work to be a success. It was common for him to stay behind and do extra training at Sunderland. He knows he has to make those sacrifices to become a better player and he'll continue to do so.

LFC WEEKLY



said. "He wanted to fight his corner with the rest of the lads. That proved to us the belief that he could cope."

Such determination has been a characteristic Henderson has maintained into the professional game. When asked why he hadn't been scoring goals from midfield, he pleaded with [striker] Darren Bent for lessons.

"When someone tells him he can't do something or that he's not good enough, it's straight onto the training ground to prove them wrong," Bent said. "He just wants to improve. There is no side to him, nothing cynical. He likes a laugh and a joke in the changing-room, but at the end of the day, he is what he is – a nice, grounded young lad."

Grounding starts at home. Henderson's life is still heavily influenced by his parents, Brian, a policeman, and mother Liz. At the start of last season, he moved out for the first time. If independence has changed his lifestyle, it has only made him more mature.

"I just love playing football and I don't want anything to jeopardise that," Henderson said. "I like to go in every day, training and working hard."

His friends away from football are an understanding bunch. "To be honest, my mates have been good since school. They used to go out but they probably told me not to, which is a good thing. But none of them are bad lads. They didn't really drink at a young age or anything like that. I didn't really go out much. I had to be back by a certain time, according to my mam.

"A fun night-out for me is watching the highlights [of a game]. I never go out. The only time I go out is Christmas night when the whole team goes out for team bonding and stuff like that. But I still won't drink or anything. I'll just have a good night out with the lads.

"My mam and dad have been a good influence on me. They have brought us up really well. They have always kept my feet on the ground and not let us get carried away.

"There was no real back-up plan [beyond football] to be honest. I was a little bit fortunate to become a player. My mam would say, 'What will you do?' but I would say, 'This is all I ever wanted to do'.

"Everyone said, 'Get a fall back'. But I only had football on my mind. I was confident I could achieve that. Now I always remind myself of what it was like being a kid and pulling on a replica strip and playing.

"I am doing it for real now and it is a dream to play for your country or your club. When I get picked for any side. I just remember what an honour it is – and how from the age of six it is what I've practised and trained to do."

Henderson made his Premier League debut for Sunderland at Stamford Bridge three years ago, had a loan spell at Coventry City in the early part of 2009 and broke regularly into the Sunderland team at the start of the season before last.

He developed a trust with his first manager at the Stadium of Light, Roy Keane: "I felt I could go to him any time and talk to him about



I DON'T THINK I CAN EVER FEEL I'VE MADE IT. I HAVE A LOT OF THINGS TO ACHIEVE AND A LOT TO DO AND FOOTBALL IS A SHORT CAREER

anything. I did that a couple of times when I felt I needed to improve."

Then under Steve Bruce, he flourished: "He [Henderson] has everything you need from the modern day player," Bruce said. "I think it's fair to say that Jordan sometimes doesn't get the headlines or the recognition that he deserves. Maybe that has something to do with where we are geographically, I don't know."

Henderson started last season with a spectacular goal for England Under-21s against Romania in a crucial qualifying match for this summer's European Championships. It prompted more superlatives from Bruce.

"We've got the brightest young prospect in the British game," the Sunderland boss claimed. "He is certainly the biggest, the best young British footballer there is. At 20 years old he's got the world at his feet. He's a fantastic footballer.

"Jordan's got the lot. He is 6ft 2in but he covered 13 km against Aston Villa without giving the ball away. He can tackle, he can pass, he can cross, he just needs to score a goal but he can do that, he can hit the ball.

"How many 20-year-olds are playing week in, week out in the Premier League?"

Henderson's international debut followed and by his own admission, he found the leap in class challenging. Despite being picked out of position by [then England boss] Fabio Capello, however, the player expressed no resentment.

"My fault, nobody else's," he said. "Obviously getting the England cap was a massive honour for me and hopefully, if I keep working harder, I'll get another opportunity, but I think on a personal level I've improved as a player and I've learned a lot, and hopefully I can carry on doing that and keep improving."

One area where he admits he still needs to improve is goals. According to Opta statistics, Henderson made more goalscoring opportunities than any other player bar Kevin Davies or Florent Malouda last season (78). But his own record of finishing such





chances remains a source of frustration. "I need to work on that," he said.

"I need to improve on finishing, I need to chip in with a lot more goals. I think it's a confidence thing. You need to believe you can score, and I need to believe that if I get into the right positions, I'm going to score."

After an enterprising start to last season, Sunderland's form dipped in the second half of the campaign and the club flirted with relegation. The experience has only made Henderson stronger, learning more from adversity than the good times. "It helps you realise that you always have to work hard – no matter how well you think you are doing."

Asked when he first realised he was good enough to make it as a professional footballer, Henderson questioned the remark: "Make it? I still don't believe I have made it. As a young footballer, if you think you have made it you are on a downward slope.

"I don't think I can ever feel I've made it. I have a lot of things to achieve and a lot to do and football is a short career."

"I CAN KICK ON AT ANFIELD"

Jordan Henderson believes he can be a part of a successful new era at Liverpool.

"Liverpool is definitely the place to help me come on as a player and improve me," he said. "The club is going in the right direction and it can go as high as it wants. There is a lot to achieve.

"It's a massive club and we have seen over the last few months how good they are. So I'm just coming here to learn and try to improve my game and I'm sure that along the way there will be a lot of happy memories."

One player Henderson is looking forward to playing alongside is Steven Gerrard.

"He is one of the best players in the world, you want to be playing with him and training with him to try and improve yourself. I've trained with him once (for England) and he was unbelievable, to be honest.



"I'm looking forward to it and there are other good players here who can help me as well. Steven has been a massive, massive player for Liverpool for years now and he still is. Hopefully I can learn a lot from him."

The Sunderland born midfielder, however, admitted it was 'a massive decision' to depart Wearside.

He said: "It's hard to leave your local club. I am a Sunderland lad, I've supported them all my life. My family are all Sunderland fans as well, and it's pretty tough because I've had some great years there. I've been there since I was seven and I'll definitely miss it, but I'm looking forward to playing for Liverpool now. This is a massive opportunity for me."

"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE JORDAN DOING LIVERPOOL PROUD"

Kenny Dalglish's transfer policies during his first reign as manager at Liverpool, then at Blackburn Rovers, followed a similar pattern: focus mainly on British targets; get them young; develop them; win trophies…

David Hodgson, Dalglish's former strike-partner "when Ian Rush wasn't fit" between 1982 and 1984, believes the purchase of Jordan Henderson is typical of the Reds boss.

Hodgson, who grew up in Gateshead to a Sunderland-supporting father, has studied Henderson's development over the last few years.

"I remember speaking to Kenny when he spent a record £5 million fee to take Chris Sutton to Blackburn from Norwich," Hodgson recalls. "Everyone said Kenny had gone barking mad. But he told me, 'Just you wait, he and Shearer will get on like a house on fire and when we win something, everybody will soon forget about the fee'. And boy was he right.

"Kenny is an astute person. He understands the kind of character that will fit in at the club. Liverpool are paying a lot of money for Henderson's potential. But Kenny has paid a lot of money in the past on potential before unlocking it. He knows how to nurture talent and make someone like Henderson the finished product.

"The wonderful thing for Henderson is that he is arriving at a club where the manager will be a father-figure to him. Kenny will embrace him and Henderson will benefit hugely from that."

Although supporters would like to believe that there is a long-term replacement out there for Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, who has just turned 31, Hodgson reiterates how important it is that Henderson is judged solely on his own ability rather than let a transfer fee alone draw comparisons with one of his new club's greatest performers.

"Gerrard is one of the best players in his generation. To replace him directly is practically impossible when you consider his achievements at Liverpool. Despite the fee for Henderson, it would be unfair to say that he is Gerrard's replacement because that automatically places an undue pressure on him. Although Liverpool and the supporters will, of course, expect to see value for money, you have to take Henderson for the individual he is. He needs time to grow into his potential."

Hodgson arrived at Liverpool after six years with Middlesbrough



and he appreciates the temperament that is needed to be a success at Anfield. He believes Henderson's family will make the transition a lot easier.

"Jordan comes from a good background and everyone I speak to about him tells me the same thing, that he does the right things off the pitch with the support of his family. He is doing everything correctly and this will be important at Liverpool where there is no margin for error. At the very top level, if things aren't right off the pitch, they usually show on it. Jordan has that side of his life boxed off.

"I would like to think that as a lad from the north-east, he does Liverpool proud and spends the next 10 years there, winning everything in sight. That would be wonderful."

"WE NEEDED TO BRING PEOPLE IN WHO WILL RAISE THE STANDARD"

Kenny Dalglish believes Jordan Henderson's maturity will help him settle quickly into life at Anfield. "He is respectful and his principles and everything else on and off the pitch are exemplary," Dalglish said.

"Not only is he a talented footballer, he's a really good person as well. He loves his football and he is very appreciative of what Sunderland have done for him."

Dalglish also revealed that Liverpool have been tracking Henderson's progress since he first broke into the Sunderland team on a regular basis. "We just needed to go out and bring people to the football club that will raise the profile and standard of the performances that we have had since January," he added. "I think Jordan falls into that category.

"People might turn around and say, 'Well you have people in there who have done really well'. Of course they have done well – and hopefully next year people will be saying the same thing about Jordan."



fulfil his potential'

he plays at the biggest grounds against big opponents. He did very well in the 3-0 win over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in November. He certainly never goes missing and even if the team are having a difficult day he still continues to give 100 per cent.

At Sunderland many supporters felt Henderson would combine well with the more combative Lee Cattermole. Unfortunately the latter was unavailable a lot over the past two seasons due to a combination of injuries and suspension, so that partnership never had the chance to truly develop.

A part of his game which Henderson himself has suggested he needs to improve upon is goalscoring. His energy levels mean he is good at bursting forward, and you can certainly imagine him doing that when a team plays with five in midfield. The next step is putting the ball in the net when he does get into those positions.

If you've looked at his goals on YouTube there is no question he can do it. He's scored some very good goals. And if he gets a few in his first few months at Liverpool I can imagine him reaching double figures next season.

He knows himself that he is not the finished article and he still needs to develop his game. With him turning 21 this week (June 17) there is obviously time for him to do so.

I would imagine that he feels going to Liverpool should help him in that sense because he'll be around better players. The situation reminds me a lot of Barry Venison. I'm not saying him and Henderson are the same type of player; they're not. But Venison also came through the ranks at Sunderland; he even captained the side in the 1985 Milk Cup final before joining Liverpool 12 months on from that day. Years later I remember watching him and he'd certainly improved as a player. Henderson will be hoping to do the same now.

"THE CROWD AT ANFIELD ARE VERY WELL EDUCATED AND THEY'LL UNDERSTAND THAT HENDERSON IS STILL A YOUNGSTER WHO IS LEARNING THE GAME"

Obviously he's still a young lad and some people at Sunderland seemed to forget that. The team went through a tough time in the second half of last season. At one stage they took just a single point from a possible 27 and looked to be in real danger of relegation.

Around that time the squad suffered a lot of injuries, particularly in midfield. It meant that Jordan had to play even when a rest might have done him some good. He unfairly took some criticism from some fans.

Sunderland is an intense football city most of the time, but even more so when things aren't going well. The situation becomes even worse if you are a local lad in the side. That might have been in his thinking when the chance to join Liverpool came along.

Henderson could benefit from a move to Anfield like Barry Venison did

The crowd at Anfield are very well educated and they'll understand that Henderson is still a youngster who is learning the game. The fact he'll be working with Dalglish and his backroom staff will also be beneficial. They'll know exactly how to nurture him and help him improve. At the moment he's got potential, if he fulfils that potential he'll be a great player. He's in the right place to do that.

Martyn McFadden and Simon Bird were talking to JOHN HYNES

Tweets

How the world greeted news of Henderson's arrival

@AnfieldIndex

@DominicKing_DM

@OptaJoe

@empireofthekop

@danrobinson23

@HayleyMcQueen

@paul_tomkins

@WhoScored

@thisisanfield

NOT ONLY IS HE A TALENTED FOOTBALLER, HE'S A REALLY GOOD PERSON AS WELL. HE LOVES HIS FOOTBALL AND HE IS VERY APPRECIATIVE OF WHAT SUNDERLAND HAVE DONE FOR HIM

"HE KEEPS IT NICE AND SIMPLE"

Martin Kelly and his new Liverpool team-mate Jordan Henderson have shared a dressing-room before. The pair first got to know each other on international duty with England Under-19s two years ago and have been friends ever since,

"Jordan's a great lad and really down to earth," Kelly said. "We get on really well and I'm made-up that he's made a mark on Sunderland's first-team over the last few seasons. He has everything you need to become a footballer at the highest level."

Kelly believes that Henderson is the kind is the kind of midfielder that England hasn't produced in a while. "The thing I like about him most is that he keeps it nice and simple. You can give him the ball under pressure and he will always keep it, even in the tightest of situations.

"He's very patient in possession and if you're under pressure you can give it to him and he'll take the sting out of a game and keep everything ticking over.

"He's also the type of player who will weigh in with a number of assists every season and score a few too."

Like all young players that feature regularly in the Premier League,



Henderson also possesses a strong mentality. "Part of the battle in getting into the side is being strong enough to deal with it when you make a mistake," Kelly said, from his own experience. "You need to keep demanding the ball and not let your head go down. That separates the ones that make it and the ones that don't.

"Jordan is definitely the kind that will never let his head drop. He's got a lot of confidence in his own ability."

"IN THE RIGHT PLACE TO FULFIL HIS POTENTIAL"

Martyn McFadden from Sunderland fanzine *A Love Supreme* watched Jordan Henderson progress through the ranks at Sunderland and recalls: "When our Under-18s reached the semi-finals of the 2008 FA Youth Cup, knocking Liverpool out along the way, he and Jack Colback – another youngster who has featured for the first-team recently – were the most impressive players.

"A year later both were part of the first-team squad for the 2009/10 pre-season Amsterdam Tournament. Steve Bruce had just taken over that summer and he was obviously impressed by what he saw. When the Premier League began, Henderson was part of the squad and played very well, despite having just turned 19.

"Energetic and dynamic, he has the ability and hunger to get around the pitch. That quality may come from the fact that his mother runs fitness classes and used to drag him along to them when he was a kid.

"His appetite for the game was demonstrated whenever Bruce suggested he might rest him. Henderson's response was usually to train harder or tell the manager he wasn't tired...

"He knows himself that he is not the finished article and he still needs to develop his game. With him turning 21 this week there is obviously time for him to do so.

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STEVE BRUCE USED TO CALL HIM HIS 'MARATHON MAN' BECAUSE HE'D REGULARLY COVER 13 OR 14 KM IN 90 MINUTES. WHEN HE'S ON FORM HE GALLOPS AROUND AND RUNS THE GAME

"The situation reminds me a lot of Barry Venison. I'm not saying him and Henderson are the same type of player; they're not. But Venison also came through the ranks at Sunderland; he even captained the side in the 1985 Milk Cup final before joining Liverpool 12 months on from that day.

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"The crowd at Anfield are very well-educated and they'll understand that Henderson is still a youngster who is learning the game. The fact he'll be working with Dalglish and his backroom staff will also be beneficial. They'll know exactly how to nurture him and help him improve.

"At the moment he's got potential – if he fulfils that potential he'll be a great player. He's in the right place to do that."

REDS LAND HENDERSON



Damien Comolli

DIRECTOR of Football Damien Comolli was delighted to get our first signing of the summer completed.

"I'm very pleased because Jordan was one of the targets we had and when you get your first target it's always a good sign because you think the others will come through as well," he said.

"We are very, very pleased. He has got all the skills technically that we needed. He's good with the ball, he's creative, he's got good passing, and he's physically very good. That's everything we wanted in a midfielder and he's versatile as well. For Kenny he will be the player we wanted."

As well as his playing attributes, Comolli feels the England U21 international shows maturity beyond his age.

"It is very difficult to believe you are talking to a 20-year-old," he continued. "You think you're talking to a 25-year-old. He's very passionate about football, very committed, a top professional. He's the type of player who'll stay behind after training and do extra work.

"We are very, very pleased. He has got all the skills technically that we needed"

"When you talk to him it's not about money or anything related to off the pitch. Everything is on the pitch: where am I going to play, have I got a chance to play, where can I develop most as a player? Kenny and I were very impressed with that and his commitment and passion for the game."

With Henderson turning 21 on June 17 many feel he is very much a player for the future. Comolli disagrees with those assertions.

"He is definitely a player for now. Obviously it's up to Kenny to decide but we see him as a player for now. In all the talks Kenny had with him he said, 'If you come you will be very, very, very much a part of my plans.' We know we are building for the future, a bit like with Luis and Andy in January, but we are also signing a player who is going to be effective from day one."



Peter Beardsley

PETER Beardsley believes Kenny Dalglish's 'sensational' managerial ability can help Jordan Henderson take his game to a whole new level.

The Anfield legend, who was signed by Dalglish in 1987, reckons his former boss has an unrivalled knack of nurturing young talent that the Wearsider can only greatly benefit from.

"If Liverpool have got Jordan Henderson, they've obviously got an outstanding young player," said Beardsley, who made 175 appearances and scored 59 goals for the club. "I would say to him: 'Listen to Kenny Dalglish'. I had four years there and he was sensational in every respect.

"Kenny's a good, shrewd manager. His application to the job and his attitude to being manager of that football club is special. He has got unbelievable enthusiasm, an unbelievable ability to spot players, nurture them and improve them. He's different class.

"Liverpool have got an outstanding young player"

"If he's not the greatest player Liverpool have ever had, he's certainly in the top three and because of that people should listen to him," Beardsley added. "He was the perfect appointment for Liverpool."



Ronnie Whelan

FORMER Liverpool midfielder Ronnie Whelan thinks Jordan Henderson has what it takes to be a success at Anfield – as long as he can handle the step up in expectation levels.

"He looks a very good player," said Whelan. "He is talked about as being one of England's best young talents, so it appears to be a good signing by Liverpool.

"He seems to have all the attributes needed to be a good central midfield player. He has good stamina and energy, he passes the ball well and his control is good. He will add plenty to Kenny's squad.

"The key now for a young player like Jordan is how he handles the step up to a big club. Liverpool is not like Sunderland, they are expected to win every week, and so it remains to be seen how he handles the pressures that come with that.

"The price doesn't matter," he added. "The same applied with Andy Carroll and Luis Suarez in January, but the fact is that you have to pay the going rate for top players."

Henderson's arrival means – along with Raul Meireles and Lucas – there is a distinctly English feel to the central midfield area.

"It does seem to be a slightly different outlook," Whelan admits. "But Kenny will not be looking at players' nationalities, he just wants the best possible players for the club.

"He has good stamina and energy and passes the ball well. He'll add plenty to Kenny's squad"

"Andy Carroll is one of the best strikers around, regardless of his nationality, and the same goes for Henderson with midfielders. It is nice to see a few home-grown players coming through, and the fact that they are young and talented is good, but Kenny will not be focusing just on English, Scottish or Irish players. Nationality makes no difference to him.

"I'm sure Jordan will be looking forward to getting started. Just look at what Kenny has done already with the players he has."







"TOP FOUR CLUBS ALL ENQUIRED ABOUT JORDAN"

Daily Mirror journalist Simon Bird claimed: "Liverpool have done very well to sign Jordan Henderson. Steve Bruce told the media in the North East that Sunderland had informal approaches about Jordan from all the teams in the top four."

He continued: "Bruce himself wasn't aware of Henderson when he became manager at the start of 2009/10. During pre-season, that quickly changed as he said there was one kid who really impressed him, that was Jordan.

"Since then he's been almost an ever-present in the side and not many players of his age have so much experience in the Premier League.

"His main attribute is his energy, his Prozone stats illustrate that. Bruce used to call him his 'Marathon Man' because he'd regularly cover 13 or 14 km in 90 minutes. When he's on form he gallops around and runs the game.

"He's a grounded lad who is close to his family and friends. His mates are Sunderland supporters and they'd give him plenty of stick if he played badly.

"I'm sure the presence of Kenny Dalglish has been a big factor in this move. As a young player you know he will treat you right and have a defined role for you.

"As soon as you find out a club like Liverpool are interested you have to seize the moment. Jordan's done that and he's got the appetite for hard work to be a success. "It was common for him to stay behind and do extra training at Sunderland. He knows he has to make those sacrifices to become a better player and he'll continue to do so."

"HE'S VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOTBALL"

LFC director of football Damien Comolli was delighted to get the Reds' first signing of the summer completed.

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As well as his playing attributes, Comolli feels the England Under-21s international shows maturity beyond his age. "It is very difficult to believe you are talking to a 20-year-old," he continued. "You think you're talking to a 25-year-old. He is very passionate about football, very committed, a top professional. He is the type of player who'll stay behind after training and do extra work.

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"AN OUTSTANDING YOUNG PLAYER"

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ENCANTADO

In Spanish it means 'delighted' and it's how goalkeeper Adrian feels about extending his stay with Liverpool Football Club, as he's revealed to the club's website

ADRIAN, CONGRATULATIONS ON SIGNING YOUR NEW CONTRACT – HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Thank you very much. I'm delighted, I'm very happy to stay in the club. Firstly because it's a reward from the club for the hard work that I've been doing since I signed two years ago – I really appreciate that confidence from the club, from the manager and from everyone involved in that situation.

And secondly and above all of that, it's a pleasure to stay in Liverpool – it's such a big club. Being as well a family club, it's very special for any player to stay here. I am privileged.

HOW DID THOSE DISCUSSIONS GO AND WAS IT QUITE A SIMPLE DECISION FOR YOU?

It started around April when [Reds sporting director] Michael Edwards' team contacted my agent and showed the intentions of the club. Then after that I had some meetings with them personally, many talks with John [Achterberg] and Jack [Robinson], the goalkeeping coaches. With Jürgen, Pep.

At the end of the day, staying was always my priority. To be fair, I had some options away as well, being out of contract. But also for me, it's really important that the family is well-settled in the city, in the UK – it's not my first year here. The kids are enjoying school also, learning some Scouse!

So it's not just the personal side, it's also my family. Everyone is happy there, so having the option to continue was not a difficult decision for me.

HOW BENEFICIAL WAS IT TO GET IT ALL SORTED OUT AHEAD OF PRE-SEASON?

It's massive. It gives you the calm in your mind to enjoy the holidays, to rest, to enjoy the family time. We've been in Spain, enjoying the good weather here as well, sunny days.

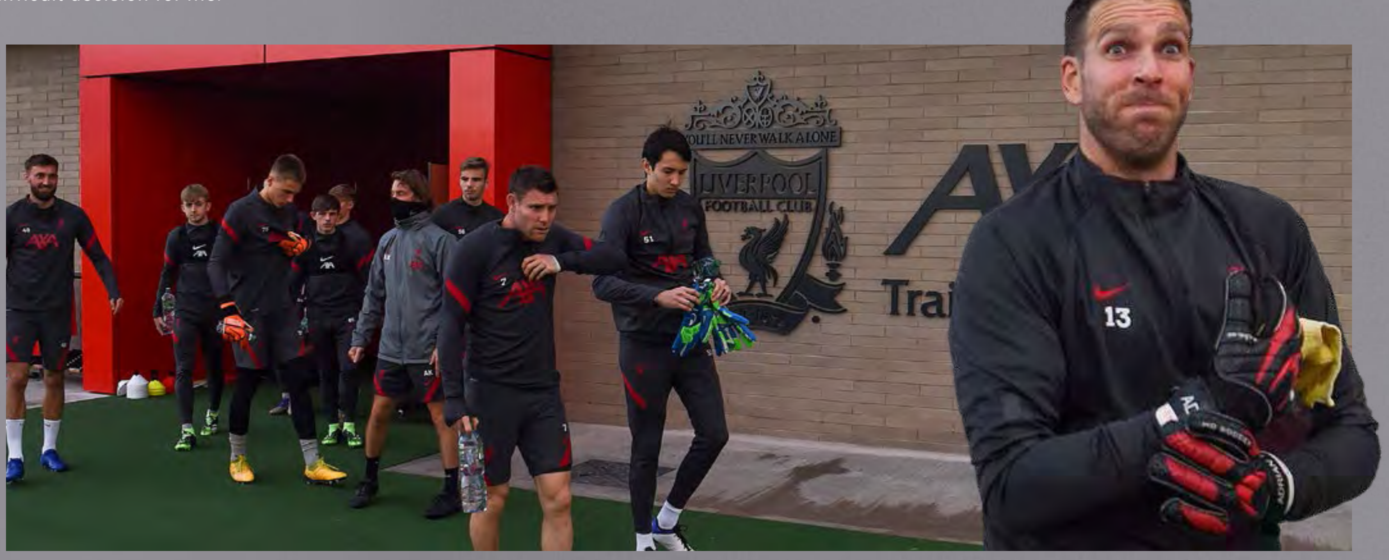
That is so important for us as a professional football player: to be, as I say, calm in your mind; to rest, to recover your battery and to be thinking about when we start the pre-season again and we go again for a new and exciting season.

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED ON AND OFF THE PITCH SINCE YOU JOINED, STILL LESS THAN TWO YEARS AGO – HOW DO YOU REFLECT UPON IT?

It's been a very intense two seasons. As you know, my quick debut with the club, then the Super Cup, all that historical season, 2019/20. And after that the COVID situation came – last season was like it was.

But I think we showed as a group the unity which we have, the togetherness – that mentality the group has shown from the beginning when the manager came to the club. We showed [it] again.

Obviously last season was a bit tricky and hard in some situations, but we finished on a high and obviously everyone can be resting because everyone gave their best until the end.



WHAT HAS THE CLUB COME TO MEAN TO YOU OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS?
It means a lot. As football players we change club normally. I played many years for Real Betis, some good seasons for West Ham as well. And now going for the third season and the fourth at Liverpool.

I'm a person that gives 200 per cent of myself to the club that I'm playing for because as football players we are very privileged people because we are doing what we love. So I like to give everything on and off the pitch, helping the team-mates, helping the team when they have the opportunity to play as well.

Also, I like to involve my family because it's really important for us that everyone feels involved. There are pictures with my kids at Anfield touching the club badges – I love it because I show them what their dad is doing, what the job of their dad is. They understand as well.

It means a lot, not just because we've been successful and we got some titles in the last seasons, but because it's a massive club, [with] lovely fans – one of the best. That's the most important thing for a football player.

IT WAS A MASSIVELY CHALLENGING SEASON FOR THE GOALKEEPERS, FOR VARIOUS REASONS – DID IT MAKE YOU BECOME EVEN CLOSER AS A GROUP?
Yeah, for sure, totally. We had many ups and downs. As goalkeepers we have to be all together. Just one can play but we are a nice group with John and Jack, the goalkeeping coaches, Ali, Caoimhin, the younger [players].

We have a lovely group, but hard workers. We love to work hard every day. We spend a long time together, more than with the rest of the outfield players.

Ali's situation with the family, we are all together – we were like





I'm a person who gives 200 per cent of myself to the club that I'm playing for because as football players we are very privileged people because we are doing what we love, so I give everything

brothers and friends trying to help him in that situation. Because we are not machines, we are human beings and we have moments in our lives. In that moment we supported Ali 200 per cent.

In other moments they supported me, or Caoimhin. We are together in that. Our [collective] target is bigger than our personal targets – the target of the club is to try to get everything in every competition.

I think the mentality of the goalkeeper group is top, it's super.

THAT WAS ANOTHER HURDLE YOU OVERCAME AS A TEAM, TO GET THIRD PLACE AND CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFICATION - HOW BIG AN ACHIEVEMENT DO YOU CONSIDER THAT?

We can be totally happy with that. Finishing third wasn't our target – we are Liverpool FC, a big club and we play to win everything in every competition. But we can be realistic as well – we are not machines, we are human beings, we have ups and downs.

The 2019/20 season was historical for the club, the expectations were very, very high, but last season was so different. [It was a] weird situation without fans, playing in Anfield. An empty stadium is very cold. We have to adapt as professional football players, we know, but it was quite hard.

We had many injuries – not an excuse but for sure many things happened against us in that situation. But we showed that resilience again, that mentality again, and to finish third seeing the season how it was.

Maybe in the last ten games nobody believed in us to finish in the Champions League [places]. But we believed, we were working hard every day. We showed again that mentality of the group, that mentality of the manager, the staff, all the people involved in the club who give us that strength.

At the end, finishing third and [qualifying for] the Champions League again for next season is a massive achievement for us.

AS YOU SAY, IT'S A UNIQUE SITUATION WITH GOALKEEPERS BECAUSE ONLY ONE OF YOU CAN PLAY – SO HOW DO YOU APPROACH THAT SITUATION?

The competition makes us better not just in the goalkeeper position but in life – when you have healthy competition to give your best. Then at the end of the day, it's the manager's decision who is playing or not.

Ali is a super, top goalkeeper, one of the best in the world. He is showing [that] every game he is playing. Not just scoring goals! Making some saves – good saves – and giving points to the team. Being together and helping each other is the most important thing in the goalkeeper mentality.

When Caoimhin made his debut many people were asking me if I wanted to play, so what did I say? I supported him. And he told the press as well that I support him every time. He is younger, he has a long time to keep playing and keep improving as well.

I tried to do what the most experienced players did with me when I was a bit younger. I tried to help him, give some advice, motivation, supporting, having that confidence that you feel better and you feel bigger when you play.

My position, I'm always trying to work hard, to give my best, to keep pushing and give that competition. And enjoying our job because, as I say, we are very privileged to do what we love, and we love to play.

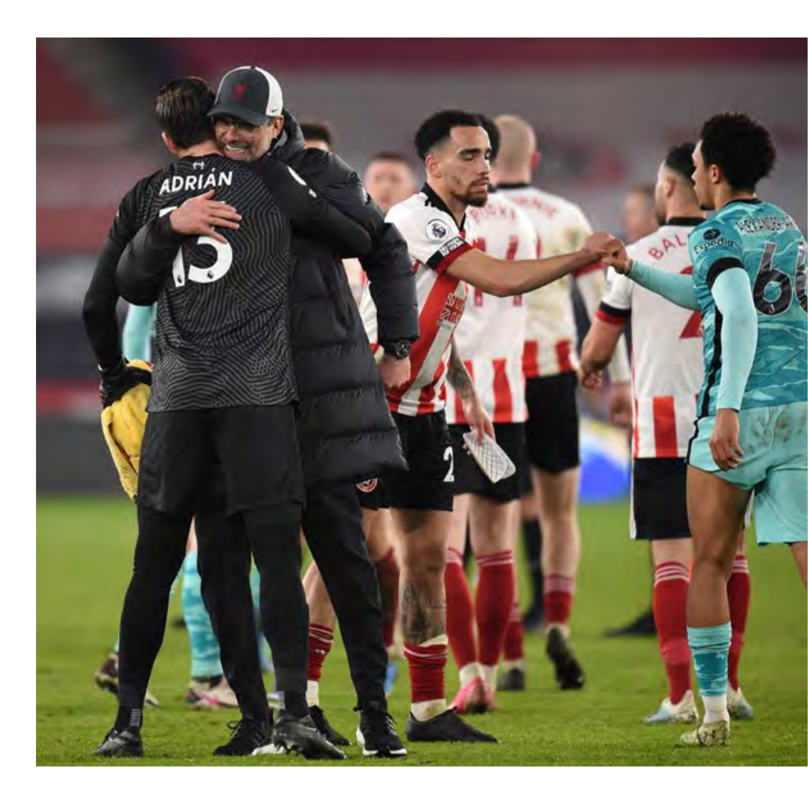
Obviously sometimes we are a bit selfish because we want to play everything. But we have to understand we have a big group. You have your role sometimes, you have another role another time. So we have to adapt and give everything for the club.

JÜRGEN KLOPP MENTIONED YOUR PROFESSIONALISM SEVERAL TIMES LAST SEASON AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE YOU PLAY ON AND OFF THE PITCH…

I try to help the team in every moment. To try to enjoy and give my experience in every second, to the player who plays in that moment or when I play, to try to be together at the same time.

As Jürgen said, I'm a team-player. I try to support, to give that confidence to those players, to try to give that confidence in the dressing-room, at the training-ground every day. Because when you are giving your best, the other one is giving their best for sure and you're pushing each other.

At the end it's good for the club, for the group, for the manager as well to take the right decision in the moment for the game. I'm happy to do that job and also to try to have my opportunity as well and give the best when I have the chance.



Next season is going to be very exciting. Hopefully again with the fans – that is a very, very important thing for us as well. Everyone knows Anfield is another player for us when it's full and the people are pushing and shouting and supporting us – we can feel it

GOALSCORING GOALIES

Adrian knows what it's like to score a winner for his team but admits his exploits had nothing on Alisson Becker's sensational headed goal at West Bromwich Albion in May.

Just over six years ago the Spaniard slotted home the decisive kick in a penalty shoot-out for West Ham against Everton to settle an FA Cup third-round replay. Moments after compatriot and fellow keeper Joel Robles had blasted his own effort against the crossbar, Adrian stepped up to score and give the Hammers a 9-8 victory and a place in the next round.

"You can imagine how we feel in that moment," he reflects now. "I felt that when I scored that penalty in 2015. That recent day [at West Brom], having the feeling which Ali gave us in that scenario, was amazing.

"The celebration on the pitch was incredible. On the bench I was jumping – I even fell down the stands! Because we couldn't believe it. But, yeah, that is life, that is football: believe until the end, believe we can get good things.

"Ali went to that corner with that mentality and everyone knows how it finished!"





LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SEASON, THERE MUST BE A RENEWED DETERMINATION TO BATTLE FOR MAJOR SILVERWARE AGAIN?

Yeah, for sure. Next season is going to be very exciting. Hopefully again with the fans – that is a very, very important thing for us as well. Everyone knows Anfield is another player for us when it's full and the people are pushing and shouting and supporting us. We can feel it.

Last season, obviously we did not have that 'plus' in our stadium. Hopefully next season is going to be so different. It's also going to be exciting in another part because we want to improve on last season, for sure. We're going to give everything.

Football is unpredictable and you can win, lose or draw. But I like to say, sometimes we win, sometimes we learn. And last season we learned a lot. We learned about the situation we were living and it's going to be very useful for next season, for sure.

THERE WERE 10,000 FANS BACK AT ANFIELD FOR THE LAST GAME OF THE SEASON – HOW DID THE PLAYERS FEEL?

We were talking after the game because it looked like a different game. It looked strange, to be fair, because we'd had to adapt to an empty stadium – as I said before, very cold and silent.

[Without fans] it was quite difficult for us, the external motivation is zero. We had to show that motivation from us, from the dressing-room, from the group that is in the stadium, starting on the game – to be in the game from the first second and on the front foot.

Now we are expecting to feel Anfield full of people, full of Reds fans supporting and pushing us in a good moment, and supporting in a bad moment as well because we will have [them] for sure. We have to show again that unity between the club, the fans and the players.

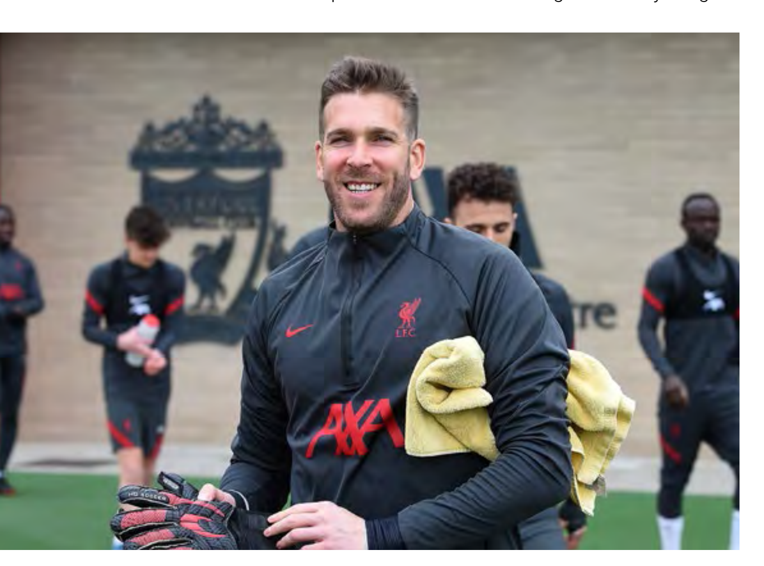
FINALLY, WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND AMBITIONS PERSONALLY AND COLLECTIVELY IN THE FUTURE?

Personally, to keep giving my best version. Keep pushing from the first second that we wear a Liverpool FC shirt. Keep giving the best to get some titles.

At the end of the day, titles are not easy when many teams are pushing and working hard as well, trying to get them. But our fans can be very calm and very relaxed because we're going to give everything to get those titles again, to give them some trophies again as we did two seasons ago.

And yes, keep enjoying playing football. And they have to keep enjoying as well, supporting us from the crowd, the stadium or around the world.

We're going to improve for sure next season because they deserve it. We are Liverpool FC and we have to go for everything.





CAOIMHIN'S CONTRACT

Fellow keeper Caoimhin Kelleher has signed a new long-term deal with the club, putting pen to paper following the 2020/21 season in which he made five first-team appearances and featured in both the Premier League and Champions League.

Kelleher also won his first cap for Republic of Ireland last month, coming on as a second-half substitute against Hungary in Budapest.

He told the club website: "I am happy to get it over the line. It was in the pipeline for a few months with negotiations and stuff, so I am delighted to get it done.

"For me, it was a positive moment to commit my future to the club for the next few years. It's such a big club and it's an honour to be a part of it. I just want to keep my progress going at the club.

"It was a big year for me in terms of playing the first-team games this year and more important games; [and] being thrown into the Champions League and Premier League games was big for my development and being able to handle that.

"It gave me a lot of confidence to try to push on, because I can play at that kind of level as well and do well. I am looking forward, I'll try to keep pushing and we'll see what happens."





HOW'S YOUR LOOK?



As we prepare for season 2021/22 in a smart new home strip, let's test your knowledge of Liverpool FC's look through the ages with 20 kit questions guaranteed to wear (ahem) you out



1 Liverpool's first kit was famously blue and white halves, but what year was the move to a red shirt?

A. 1893 B. 1896 C. 1899

2. The Liver Bird crest was worn on shirts for the first time for which cup final?

A. 1950 FA Cup B. 1965 FA Cup
C. 1966 European Cup Winners' Cup



3. Including replays and two-legged ties, how many of LFC's cup final victories have come in an away strip?

A. 0 B. 2 C. 4

4. In what year did Bill Shankly introduce the all-red strip?

A. 1964 B. 1966 C. 1968



5. Who were Liverpool's first shirt sponsors in 1979?

A. Hyundai B. Huawei C. Hitachi

6. Which kit manufacturer have the Reds partnered with for two separate periods in their history?

A. Umbro B. Adidas C. Reebok

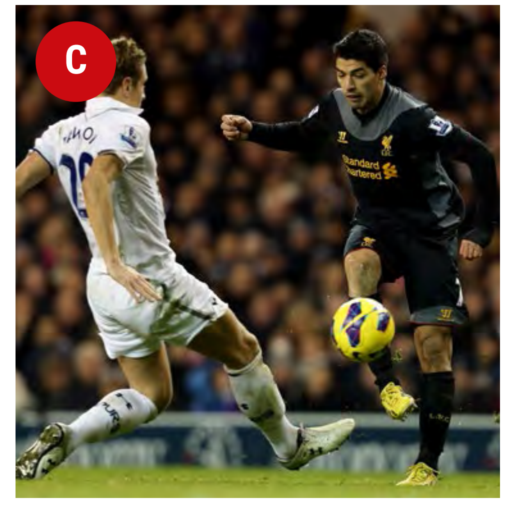


8. Liverpool's centenary shirt brought a new crest that would evolve into the club's current badge, but which sponsor also appeared on that top for the first time?

A. Carlsberg B. Candy C. Crown Paints







9. Which of the above shirts was based on one of LFC's first away-kit designs (though that one was white and red)?

10. Which if these is NOT a marketing slogan for one of Warrior Sports' LFC shirts?

A. Rise Up B. Tell Us Never
C. #WeComeNotToPlay

11. Which season did the Reds first wear a sleeve sponsor on their shirts?

A. 2016/17 B. 2017/18 C. 2018/19



12. How many LFC goalkeeper kits did Alisson Becker wear in the 2018/19 season?

A. 2 B. 3 C. 4

13. The kits of our 2019/20 title-winning campaign were in tribute to which former manager on the 100th anniversary of his birth?

A. Bill Shankly B. Bob Paisley
C. Joe Fagan

14. The teal trim from the club crest has been on both ... shirts so far, but ... season's ...

A. ...



15. Up to and including the reveal of the 2021/22 home kit, how many outfield player shirts have there been during Jordan Henderson's time at LFC?

A. 21 B. 26 C. 31

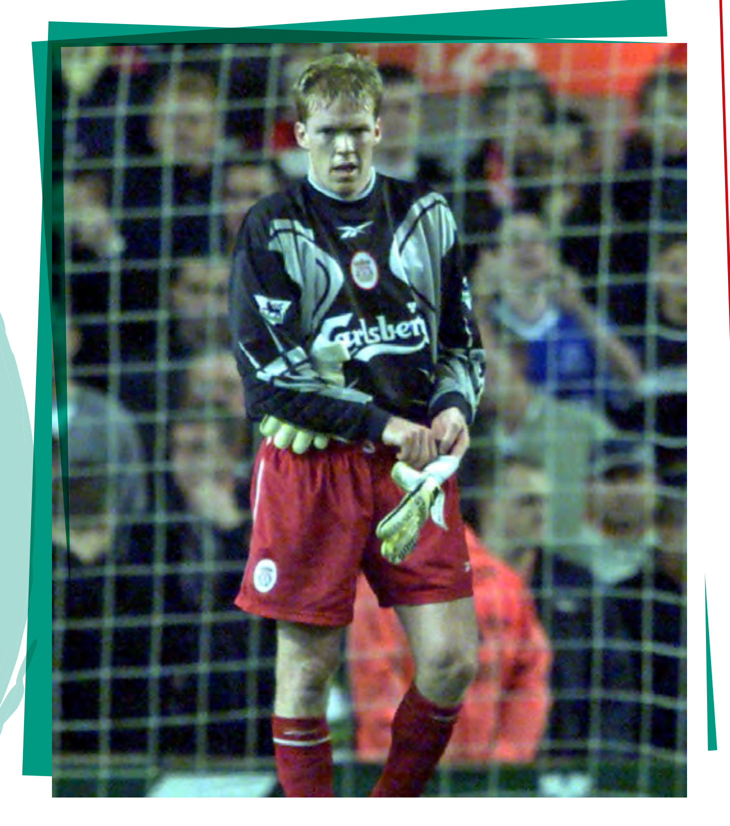


Bonus round

16. Can you name these two players modelling the first Reebok shirt in 1997?

17. Whose goalkeeper's shirt did Steve Staunton wear in 1999 after Sander Westerveld was sent off against Everton and the Reds had used all their subs?

18. What was peculiar about LFC wearing this change strip at Barcelona in April 2001?





19. What shirt number did Steven Gerrard wear in a match to celebrate the city of Liverpool's Capital of Culture status?

20. What is the official colour for the collar and sleeve cuffs for Nike's 2021/22 home shirt?

ANSWERS: *1. 1. B 2. A 3. B (1981 League Cup final replay, 2001 FA Cup) 4. A 5. C 6. B (1985-1996 and 2006-2012) 7. C (1982/83-1984/85 and 2019/20) 8. A 9. C (though A was a throwback to 1989 and B 1996) 10. B (Tell Us Never was Nike's slogan last season) 11. A 12. C (a one-off not for sale silver kit was worn at home to Barcelona) 13. B 14. C 15. C 16. John Scales and Steve Harkness 17. Sub keeper Jorgen Nielsen, who never played a first-team game 18. It was actually the following season's away kit, and worn due to various kit clashes 19. He wore '08' – though only for 18 minutes as he was sent-off! 20. Bright crimson*



MILNER

MY CAREER IN PICTURES

The Reds vice-captain tells his amazing Premier League story through evocative images from ten games with five clubs including Liverpool



SUNDERLAND 1 LEEDS UNITED 2

(Boxing Day 2002)

"I'd just scored my first goal in the Premier League, which was amazing.

"I think it was a ball from the left by Jason Wilcox. I had come on as a first-half sub [for Alan Smith] and I got across the front-post and tapped it in [Leeds came from behind to win 2-1 at the Stadium of Light thanks to a late penalty by Robbie Fowler].

"At the time you're just concentrating on football and trying to get into the first team and doing what you can, but when I think back now and think how young I was [16], it's crazy. I'd been doing my GCSEs five months earlier, so when you look back it does seem pretty ridiculous when you look at the size of the shirt and things like that!

"It shows how young I was, really. I was the youngest goalscorer in Premier League history, but at the time I don't really feel that you think too much of it. Obviously Wayne Rooney had come through and was absolutely exploding. He took a lot of the limelight which was nice for me. It meant I could just slip in a bit under the radar.

"But when you look back now and think how young I was, being able to play and score goals in the Premier League at that age was a dream, especially having been a Leeds fan all my life. To be able to do that was obviously special and it's nice to look back on and see the photos of me with people like Gaz Kelly here, who was a great influence. I watched him for many years before I was able to play with him. And Robbie, who is obviously a Liverpool legend as well.

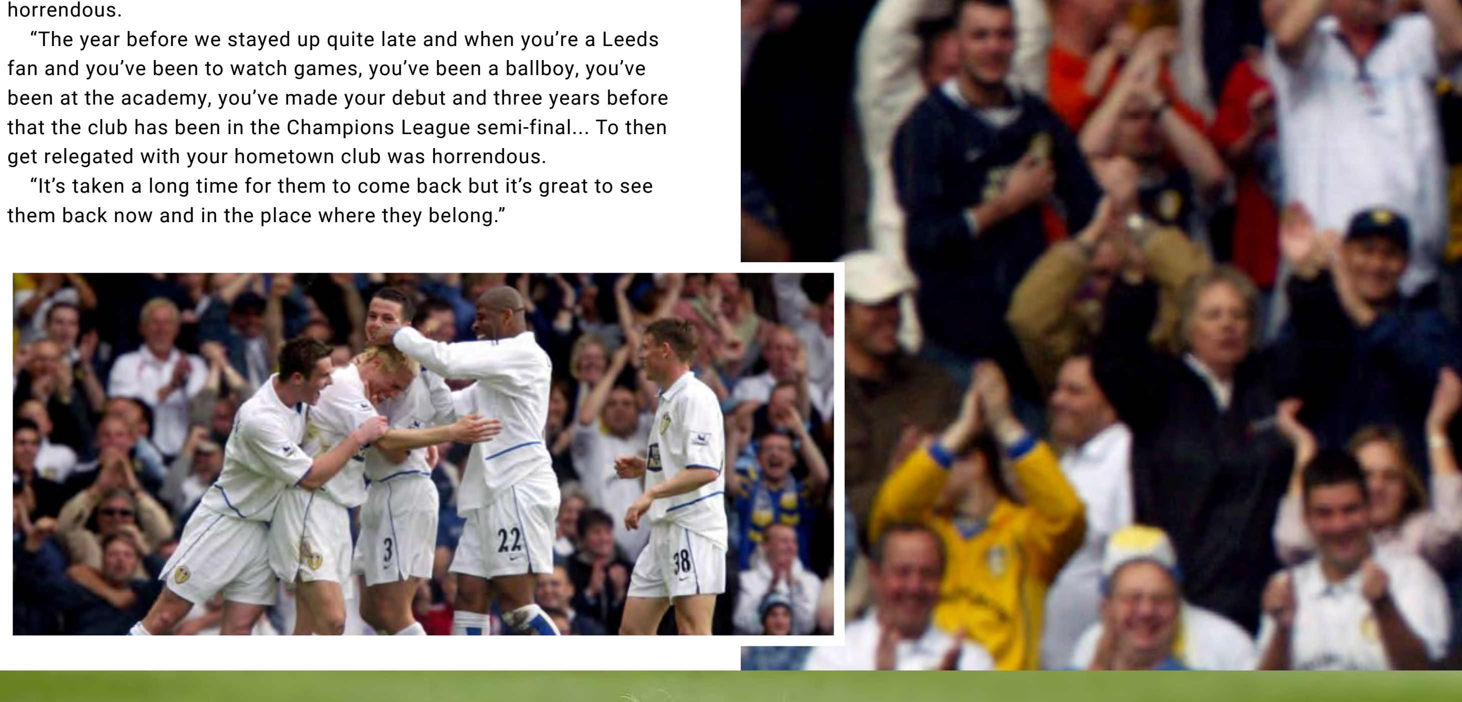
"To play with those players at that age was special."

LEEDS UNITED 3 CHARLTON ATHLETIC 3
(8 May 2004)

"The day that relegation [for Leeds] was confirmed at Bolton the week before this game was definitely one of the low points of my career. This was the last home game of the season and Alan Smith got carried off the Elland Road pitch because it was his last game. Relegation was horrendous.

"The year before we stayed up quite late and when you're a Leeds fan and you've been to watch games, you've been a ballboy, you've been at the academy, you've made your debut and three years before that the club has been in the Champions League semi-final... To then get relegated with your hometown club was horrendous.

"It's taken a long time for them to come back but it's great to see them back now and in the place where they belong."





MIDDLESBROUGH 2 NEWCASTLE UNITED 2
(14 August 2004)

"It probably should've felt more weird than it did to be wearing a shirt other than Leeds, but I left and then had pre-season with Newcastle – I think we went to the Far East or somewhere like that – and I'd had enough time to bed down.

"I was unveiled alongside Nicky Butt and it was a Tees-Tyne derby, Middlesbrough away, where I made my debut. The team I was going into had Alan Shearer in the side and to work under Sir Bobby Robson was special as well.

"It was a surprise to leave Leeds. I didn't know it was happening until I went back to pre-season training, so it happened very quickly, but once that happens, that's football. It moves quickly and you have to adapt, get on the page and kick on.

"I remember some of the sessions that Sir Bobby did and how he'd keep you after training and work on little situations such as if the ball comes into you, doing a little 'round the corner' and also set-up patterns that you would get in the game.

"It was unfortunate that I didn't get to work with him for too long because he lost his job quite early on in that season. But to work with somebody like Sir Bobby even for a short time was fantastic because of the amount that you learnt and just to be around him was great.

"He was obviously a fun person to be around. He was amazing."





ASTON VILLA 3 WEST HAM UNITED 0
(14 August 2010)

"That was a strange day and a special day. I had some great times at Villa. We were very close to winning a trophy and getting in the top four but we didn't quite get it done.

"There had been a lot of speculation that summer about me going to Man City. Martin O'Neill had just left and [Villa caretaker-manager] Kev MacDonald asked me if I wanted to play. I said, 'Well yeah, I'm a Villa player, sure I want to play'.

"I'm pretty sure I started getting booed at the start of that game by the fans. But then they were seeing that I was giving everything, putting a few tackles in and I also managed to score so it was special to get the ovation when I was subbed off towards the end of the game.

"The Villa fans were amazing all the time I was there, including my initial loan spell. It's a massive club and a great place to play football and I definitely became a better player while I was there. So it was a nice way to sign off, winning the game, getting a goal and receiving that ovation from the stands even though they knew I would probably leave. That shows what great fans they are too."

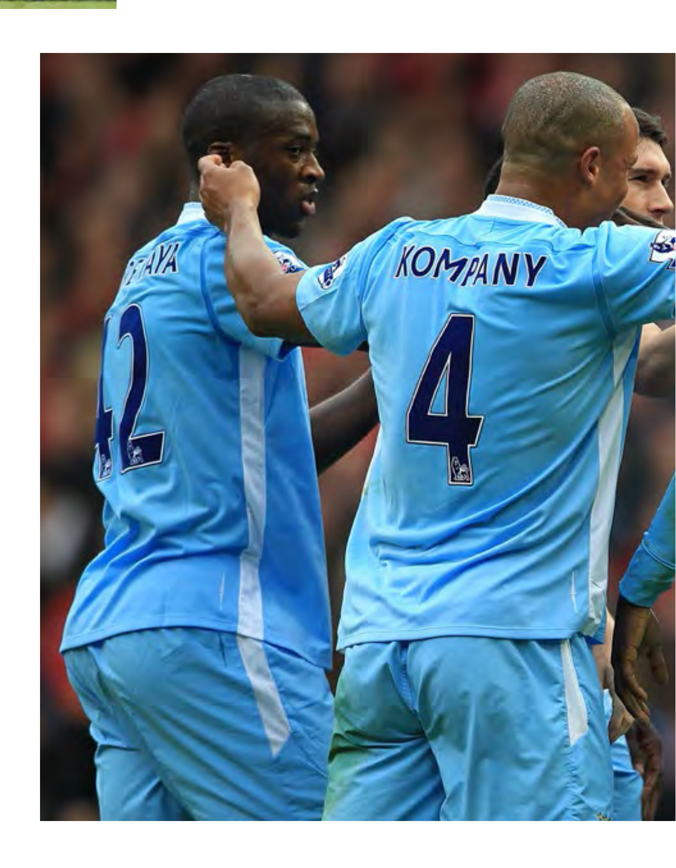
MANCHESTER UNITED 1 MANCHESTER CITY 6
(23 October 2011)

"This ranks as quite high up in the favourite games in my career, to be fair. Obviously being a Leeds fan and growing up to dislike the red side of Manchester, to go there and put in that performance and score the goals we did was very pleasing.

"I think this picture might have been after Mario's [Balotelli] second. We linked up down the right, David [Silva], Micah [Richards] and myself. I think to go to rivals like that and win that well with the performance we put in was special.

"That was the season City won the Premier League for the first time. We'd come off winning the FA Cup which was the thing that gave us that belief that we'd won a trophy together and this is where we could kick on. Obviously various players had won trophies elsewhere but to do it as one group was important.

"Then obviously you're playing against your rivals and you go there quite early in the season and you put that marker down. I think that gave us the confidence then to kick on and push on to do what we did after that."



EVERTON 2 MANCHESTER CITY 3
(2 May 2014)

"This was a massive win in City's second title-winning season of 2013/14. We always struggled at Everton and it's obviously a very difficult place to go and we went one-down as well, if I remember correctly, as [Ross] Barkley scored a worldie. So to come back from behind to win the game in what was the third-last game of the season was so important.

"We knew what we needed to do. We needed to win these games and so you had to go and do it. To put in the performance we did away at Everton, get that result and contribute like that at a tough place at that stage of the season was obviously important."



MANCHESTER CITY 1 LIVERPOOL 4
(21 November 2015)

"I think this showed the level that we could achieve. Obviously when the manager [Jürgen Klopp] came in, he was trying to stamp his authority on the team, and he was trying to instil how he wanted to play into us.

"Early on we had some very, very good performances but then the next week we'd be very, very poor and that was all part of the process of getting to the level that we needed to, being able to do it consistently.

"Obviously beating a team as good as Man City and in the way we did was really pleasing. If anyone had any doubt, which they probably didn't anyway, that showed that we were on the right path, that we weren't too far away and that the process had started."



BOURNEMOUTH 0 LIVERPOOL 4
(8 December 2018)

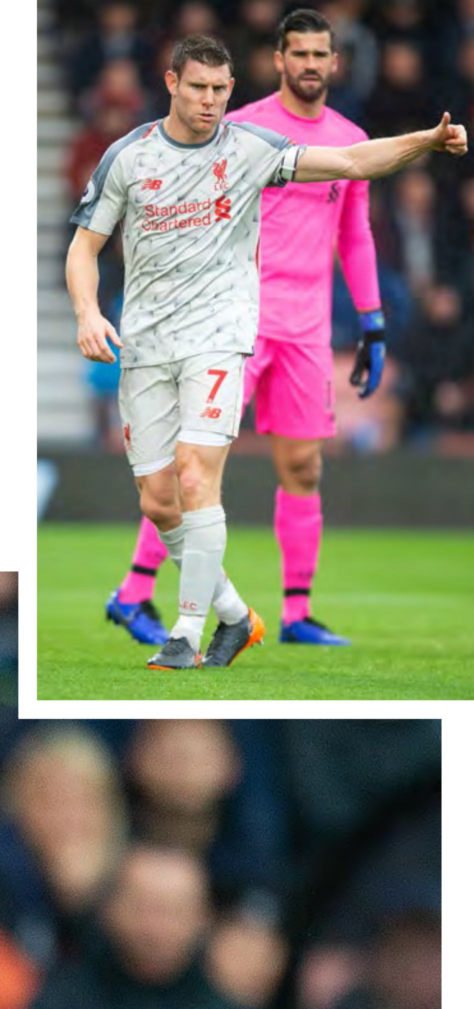
"I think I played at right-back so that was a lovely way to bring up my 500th Premier League appearance!

"It's obviously a lot of games and a lot of hard work. It's not one I really reflect on at this moment in time as it's a team-game, but probably when I come to look back at my career and think about it, I'll know it's a lot of games especially when I think of all the places I've played!

"Someone gave me a stat last season about the number of games I'd played between playing my last game at Elland Road for Leeds and going back there with Liverpool in April and it's crazy how time flies and all the things that have happened in that time.

"Could I ever reach Gareth Barry's Premier League record [653]? No, he's way out in front. Gaz was an absolute machine. He's obviously a good mate of mine and he was an unbelievable player. I think people didn't have a clue how good he was until he played for their team and then they managed to watch him week in, week out and realised how good he was. He could play in different positions but he was so good on the ball, did so much selfless running for the team and played so many games.

"I'm not focusing on that to be honest. I'm just trying to contribute to Liverpool as much as I can for as long as I can."



LIVERPOOL 2 LEICESTER CITY 1
(5 October 2019)

"It's funny because I've seen so much said about this celebration and people saying it was like [Kylian] Mbappe and things like that. The actual story behind it was that we had been doing the TV stuff before the season and they always ask you to do stupid celebrations and things like that and I just stood there with my arms crossed.

"They said, 'Are you going to do that if you score?' and I said, 'Yes, I will'. Then they said, 'You're not going to' so I said, 'Alright, watch me!' So it was a bit of a joke with our press department and the Sky people and things like that.

"Obviously the late penalty was quite a big goal and a big moment but as soon as it went in, it just came to me that that's what I'd promised I'd do, so that's what I did to celebrate. I had to do it to prove a point!

"It was a big game. Leicester had started that season very well and I think they were still our closest rivals by the time we played them the second time, around Christmas. Obviously it was the last moment and one of the first times we'd had VAR, so it was a new experience in terms of waiting for the kick to be taken and even if it was going to be a penalty and so on.

"In your mind you're thinking it's the 94th minute, everything is on this, and you're trying to keep yourself calm and ready, but you also know it might not even be a penalty! So that was a new experience but luckily enough I managed to put it away and it was a big three points.

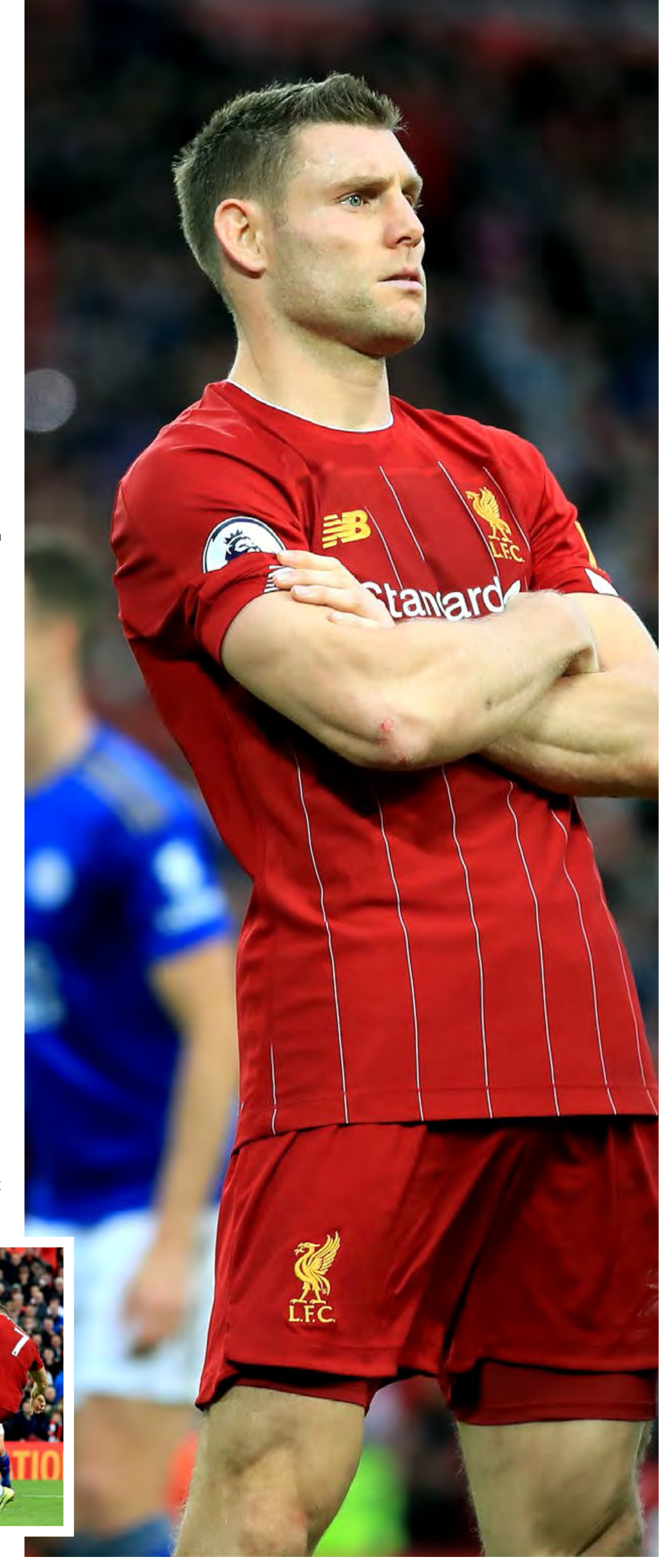
"I probably don't think any team I've been a part of felt as good as we did in that season in terms of the levels of consistency we showed and the points-totals we managed to get, totals we managed over two seasons in a row. Things were going for us, we were winning games and even when we were not playing well, we still managed to grind it out.

"It was probably only last season where we weren't as good that people probably looked back and realised how ridiculous we were for those couple of seasons and now that's the level that we need to strive to get back to.

"When you think about it, 196 points over two seasons is a hell of a lot, especially when you look at some of the points-totals that have won the Premier League beforehand. We came second with 97 points in 2018/19 which was staggering really, and obviously ourselves and City were just pushing each other all the way.

"Winning the league in 2019/20 was an incredible team achievement and a show of ruthlessness really in every single game, but we also had luck as well. There were probably games last season where we played better but didn't get the result and that's football, that's why everybody loves It.

"It shows that sometimes things align and you get a bit of luck with injuries or you get a bit of luck with decisions or last-minute penalties. Coupled with some very, very good performances and the consistency level to do it week in, week out like we did, meant it was a special season to be a part of."







LEEDS UNITED 1 LIVERPOOL 1
(19 April 2021)

"Going back to Elland Road was different to how I thought it would have been, to be honest. Obviously with everything that was going on at the time [the European Super League protests], it took the focus off returning to Leeds really. It was more about trying to focus on the game which was very difficult.

"That basically changed everything in my mind in terms of the focus for me returning to Leeds and how that was going to feel, so the backdrop to things changed it quite a lot."




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It marked the end of an era when Georginio Wijnaldum's departure was finally confirmed, what a journey it's been for all of us →



December 2015. Newcastle United 2 Liverpool 0. Jürgen Klopp's first away defeat as Reds' boss. But sometimes you take a positive from a negative. This was most certainly one of those days.

"Wijnaldum was rightly named man of the match," reported *The Times*, "because he was instrumental in both goals, forcing Martin Skrtel's own-goal and then lifting the ball over Simon Mignolet, the Liverpool goalkeeper, in added time to make the game safe at 2-0."

Georginio Wijnaldum's all-action midfield display for Newcastle caught the eye. When he ran beyond Nathaniel Clyne to clip the game-clincher over Reds keeper Mignolet in the last minute, Sky Sports co-commentator Davie Provan remarked: "I'm not sure where the midfielder found the energy from at this stage of the game to make that run."

Klopp, who was looking for an energetic, hard-working, indefatigable midfielder with an eye for goal to fit the counter-pressing system he was instilling into his new Liverpool side, liked what he saw.

Enquiries were made and seven months later the 25-year-old Dutch international midfielder was at Melwood holding a scarf with 'LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB' emblazoned across it.

Just like Dietmar Hamann 17 years earlier, Wijnaldum moved to Merseyside after a year on Tyneside. Just like Dietmar became Didi, Georginio became Gini. And just like Hamann in 2005, Wijnaldum would become a Champions League winner in 2019. But the glory of Madrid is only part of Gini Wijnaldum's Liverpool story.

"Liverpool is a club with a great history," he said after he was unveiled, "but you want to get more history, create history, and be part of that. That's what I want. I came here to win something and I'm going to do everything to make it happen.

"Can you imagine what would happen in Liverpool if we became champions after 27 years? The place will explode! And that is something I want to realise. When you play for a team like Liverpool you must always have the intention to win things.

"I came to Liverpool for success, but also because when I spoke to Jürgen he told me the way he wanted to play, and how he wanted to build the team. The project was really interesting, so in that moment I wanted to be part of it."

Wijnaldum took the number five shirt, the number he made his Feyenoord debut in nine years earlier when, aged 16 years and 148 days old, he became the club's youngest-ever player. After wearing no10 at PSV Eindhoven, whom he captained to an Eredivisie title in 2015, he wore no5 again at Newcastle. "It's quite a lucky number for me," he said. "I feel good with a no5 and when I came to Liverpool it was also free, so I took it."

Perhaps it was fate as previous wearers of that no5 shirt for the Redmen include Ray Kennedy, who in 1981 scored a goal that put the Reds in a European Cup final, and Ronnie Whelan, a versatile yet somewhat underrated 1980s midfielder who knitted play together, was adept at maintaining possession and had a habit of popping up with big goals in big games. Which is precisely what Gini did in his first season at Anfield when, playing in a more advanced midfield role as he does for the Netherlands, he netted six goals and contributed no fewer than eleven assists – the most by any Liverpool player in 2016/17.

Two goals stick in the memory: his header to give the Reds a 1-0 victory against Pep Guardiola's Manchester City at Anfield on New Year's Eve; and his powerful drive to opening the scoring in Liverpool's must-win clash with Middlesbrough on the final day of the season at Anfield with Champions League qualification at stake. To this day, that Middlesbrough goal remains Gini's favourite in a red shirt.

"We played a really good game against Manchester City that day, which was really difficult because they were also good, but in the end I scored the winner so it was a nice win for us and a good way to end the year!

"The goal against Middlesbrough in the last game of the season was the most beautiful goal because in the moment when I scored the situation was that we were sixth in the league table.



Words: Chris McLoughlin

"THE GOAL AGAINST MIDDLESBROUGH IN THE LAST GAME OF THE 2016/17 SEASON WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE OF WHAT IT MEANT FOR US"

"We needed to win because the other teams we were competing with [for fourth place] had already scored, but we were still nil-nil.

"One minute before half-time I scored and there was relief for everyone! We could feel it. Everyone was stressed and nervous – not only the supporters but on the pitch – because we hadn't created many big chances, but then I scored that goal out of nowhere. Because of the moment we were in it makes it the most beautiful goal for me."

The importance of securing Champions League qualification with a 3-0 win that day can not be understated. It helped to give Liverpool additional pulling power – and the finances – to bring Mohamed Salah to the club in the summer of 2017. Andy Robertson and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain followed suit, and in January 2018 centre-half Virgil van Dijk also became a Liverpool player.

Salah's arrival gave Klopp a 'Fab Four' of Salah, Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and Philippe Coutinho and with the manager understandably keen to get all four on the pitch, and defensive midfielder Lucas Leiva having departed for Lazio, Wijnaldum's role in the team changed. He began to play deeper at the expense of individual goals and assists but to the benefit of the team.

"I prefer to play as a number 10," he admitted, "but the way we play here we don't play with a number 10. We play with two number eights who are attacking and defending, so it's a different style of play. But the way I was brought up was playing as a number 10, being in front of the goal and scoring goals – there is the most joy in both for me.

"I always want to score 10 in a season, but it is not always possible.

"This is a new role for me. At my previous club I was playing as an attacking midfielder. Most of the time I was only attacking, I had to defend less than here at Liverpool."

His versatility became even clearer in December 2017 when injuries and illness meant Wijnaldum played at centre-back [alongside Dejan Lovren and Emre Can] in a 5-1 win at Brighton – "it was difficult because I have never played there, but the manager was running out of options" – but it was the Reds' progress in Europe that proved to be the story of the season.

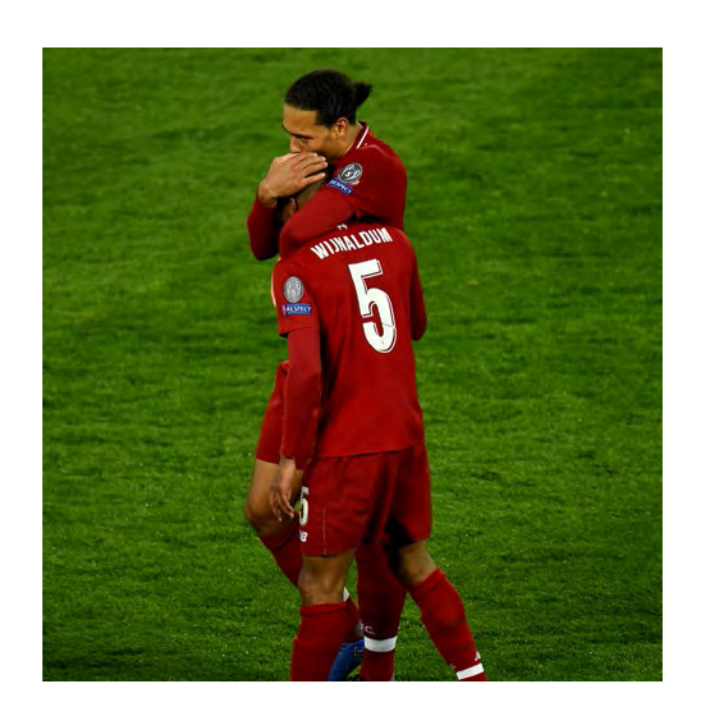
Liverpool's 4-2 win against Hoffenheim in a Champions League qualifier four months earlier was Gini's first taste of European football at Anfield. He was blown away by the noise.

"Wonderful!" he said when asked to describe it. "After 20 minutes we were 3-0 up so I couldn't wish for a better start in my first European game at Anfield than that! The fans were great, they helped us like they do in every game, and you could see that the whole club – from the players to the fans – wanted to qualify for the Champions League. It was a good day, but I have to say that in the Premier League the fans always support us too."

By then the Kop also had a song for Gini, reworking dance hit *This Girl* by Kungs Vs Cookin On 3 Burners. It was such a hit that Klopp was even spotted throwing out a few shapes to it at a charity function for The James Milner Foundation.



"PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE DOUBTED US AND THOUGHT WE COULDN'T DO IT, BUT WE SHOWED ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE"



"Every time they sing my name it is wonderful," said Gini. "You never get bored of hearing your name sung! It is really special because in my first year I already have a song.

"I really feel the appreciation of the fans when they sing it. Every player wants to feel appreciated, but sometimes at clubs, players are there for years and don't have a song. In a game against Bournemouth I made an error and played the ball straight to the feet of the striker [Benik Afobe] and he scored, but even after that the supporters were still singing my name. So I feel appreciated at Liverpool and that is a good feeling because I love to be here.

"I love to play for Liverpool, for the club and the fans and I already knew the song that they sing. I think it was at Manchester United away when it started and I already loved the song, so to mix it with my name was just wonderful."

The travelling Kop were soon singing Wijnaldum's name all the way to Kiev. Gini played in 14 of Liverpool's 15 Champions League games in season 2017/18 and it was his goal in the semi-final second leg in Rome – his first away from Anfield – that ultimately secured a 7-6 aggregate success against AS Roma and a place in the final. He didn't get his hands on ol' big ears in Kiev, but things were different 12 months later in Madrid.

Klopp brought central midfielders Fabinho and Naby Keita to the club in the summer of 2018. With skipper Jordan Henderson a mainstay in the side, many-a-pundit predicted that Wijnaldum would be the man to miss out. But Gini saw it another way.

"I think it's a good sign because Liverpool is a big club in the world and will always sign big players," he said. "I'm not really worried if they sign a player because every player has to show in training that they should start the games, so when you get a chance you have to make sure you're ready.

"It's good that there are a lot of good players here as when you train with them it makes you automatically get better – not only the midfielders but also the defenders and the attackers because we see each other on the pitch. You play against everyone, so not only midfielders.

"The only thing I'm interested in is giving 100 per cent and trying to convince the manager he has to choose me."

Further bolstered by the arrival of goalkeeper Alisson, Liverpool's 2018/19 team was one of the best in the club's entire history. They amassed 97 points in the Premier League, the third highest tally ever recorded, yet were still pipped to the title by Manchester City in one of the most epic title-races of all time.

Wijnaldum played more games than any other Liverpool midfielder and also scored his first away Premier League goal in a 2-1 win against Spurs at Wembley – meaning his first two goals away from Anfield in a red shirt came in stadiums where LFC had previously won the European Cup. Speaking of which, Liverpool also progressed to another Champions League semi-final, where they met Barcelona.

In the first leg in Camp Nou, Wijnaldum stepped in for Firmino, who wasn't fully fit, and played as a false nine. Lionel Messi did his thing, Barca won 3-0 and Liverpool were written off with an injured Firmino and a concussed Salah both missing the second leg.

Despite their absences, Wijnaldum started on the bench at Anfield, a decision that wound him up and made him ready to prove a point when he came on at half-time for the injured Robertson.

History will forever show that Gini netted in the 54th and 56th minutes as Reds overturned that three-goal deficit to beat Barcelona 4-0 on Anfield's greatest-ever night. Yet between Wijnaldum firing Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross into the net and beating Marc-Andre Ter Stegen with a header from Xherdan Shaqiri's cross, only 31 seconds of football were played.

A VAR check, after Wijnaldum and Ter Stegen wrestled each other for the ball in the Kop-end net after Gini's first goal, accounted for the delay, and the noise when the Dutch midfielder levelled the aggregate score at 3-3 was off the scale. Then Divock Origi did his thing and Barca were out.

"I think the people from outside doubted us and thought that we couldn't do it, but once again we showed that anything is possible," Gini told BT Sport at full-time with *Allez Allez Allez* still ringing in his ears.

"I'm really, really emotional, because I was really angry at the manager that he put me on the bench. I had to do something and when I came on I













"HE'S BEEN A BIG PART OF OUR LIVES FOR SO LONG, THERE IS NOTHING I WON'T MISS ABOUT HIM. I WILL MISS THE PLAYER HE IS LIKE CRAZY – HIGHEST-QUALITY ABILITY, ONE OF THE SMARTEST PLAYERS I HAVE EVER HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO COACH. HIS CONTRIBUTION WAS OFF THE SCALE, A MANAGER'S DREAM"

just tried to help the team. I'm happy I could help the team with two goals and overall it was a good team performance."

Those goals captured Gini – and Origi – the attention that night, but the fact remained that Wijnaldum often went under the radar for his displays, something his manager was later asked about.

"It is just so obvious, Gini's importance," replied Klopp. "It is both directions, small spaces, big spaces, it is hard challenges, fine football, pretty much all of that.

"Is he the perfect midfielder? From the skillset, 100 per cent. He has all the things you need. There was his header against Barcelona too.

"He is not the tallest, but he is good in the air. He is a good jumper with good timing, all that stuff. It all makes him a pretty good footballer. That is how it should be. It is not my fault if he goes under the radar. You cannot ask me why he goes under the radar. I don't set the radar!"

In the searing Madrid heat on 1 June 2019, Wijnaldum ran himself into the ground for 62 minutes against Tottenham Hotspur before being replaced by Milner. When the full-time whistle blew, Gini Wijnaldum was a Champion of Europe.

"It changes your life," he said, "because you'll always be a Champions League winner. It's a great honour for everyone to have won it. It's a difficult thing to do and when you look around, you can see how many good players haven't won the Champions League."

He almost had to change his smartphone as during the open-top bus celebrations in Liverpool he dropped it onto the road while on Instagram live. "It's still working!" he laughed while celebrating with Virgil after it was passed back up to him.

Just like when he is on the pitch, Gini had a huge smile on his face that day and the ethos he lives his life by was something he spoke about in an interview for the official matchday programme.

"My target is always to enjoy life. That's the way I think. Everything follows if you enjoy your life, so I'm just a person who sees what I want to do and then tries to do it.

"If you don't enjoy life then it is difficult to do other things and in a lot of circumstances it is already difficult to enjoy things. So I try to enjoy my life."

Gini enjoyed adding the UEFA Super Cup to his medal collection in August 2019 when Chelsea were beaten on penalties following a 2-2 draw in Istanbul and he was in the Liverpool squad as the Reds won the club's first FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar in December, but he missed both games against CF Monterrey and CR Flamengo after picking up a rare muscle injury in the previous league match against Watford.

By the time the Reds were due to play Watford again in February 2020, they were 22 points clear at the top of the Premier League with Gini scoring the opening goal in a 3-2 win against West Ham United that made it a record-equalling 18th consecutive top-flight win and a 21st on the bounce at Anfield to go a whopping 22 points clear.

When Bournemouth were beaten 2-1 at Anfield in March, Liverpool moved onto 82 points – a tally that would have ultimately proved enough to clinch the title even before the coronavirus pandemic intervened and changed all of our lives.

After a nervous three-month break, football finally resumed and on 25 June 2020, a day after beating Crystal Palace 4-0 at Anfield, defeat for rivals Man City at Chelsea meant that Liverpool FC were champions of England for the first time since 1990. A 30-year wait was finally over.

"When you think how much this means to the supporters, to us as a team and for the club, I think everyone realises how big it is for us," said Wijnaldum, who played in 37 of the Reds' 38 league games. "

A lot of great Liverpool teams have tried to win the Premier League before, but we did it. We did it for the club.

"When you are used to winning titles it is really hard if it stops. It is harder to accept for the fans, so that's what makes it so special for us. Many have tried, but not a lot have succeeded, so it was a really big accomplishment for us as a team.

"If you look at the whole season, the things we had to overcome to get into the situation we are in as champions is a lot. We train and play at 100 per cent, but we had to go to Qatar, win the Club World Cup and then come back and perform at a time in the season when we have a lot of games. That was really tough.

"Overcoming things like that makes it so beautiful because we had an answer to every problem that we had. That says something about this team, about how strong this team is.

"We won the Champions League, but for me this one definitely feels different because I know what it means for the club and the supporters. They are both really big trophies, and trophies you want to win, but I know winning the Premier League means such a lot here."

The Reds were unable to add another trophy to the collection during an injury-disrupted 2020/21 campaign played largely behind-closed-doors, but Wijnaldum appeared in all 38-league games – making 51 appearances in total – and skippered the Reds on 11 occasions. He was also appointed as captain of his country ahead of the delayed Euro 2020, after van Dijk suffered a season-ending injury, and has enjoyed a goal-filled tournament with his double against North Macedonia in the group stage taking him to 25 goals for the Netherlands, equalling Marco van Basten's tally.

After scoring his 20th goal for the Reds during a 4-0 win against Wolves in December at Anfield he copied Virgil's 'hand-under-the-chin' celebration and dedicated it to him. "He said to me in the dressing-room, 'I want to see something today, I want a goal'. So I said, 'No problem!'

"He liked what I did. He didn't expect it, so it was a surprise for him, but he liked it – he is still a little bit with us on the pitch."

The next time the pair are on a pitch together will be in Netherlands shirts as after five seasons, 237 appearances, 22 goals, 15 assists and four major honours, Gini Wijnaldum is now a Paris Saint-Germain player following the expiry of his Liverpool contract.

Wijnaldum was given a well-deserved standing ovation from the 10,000 supporters allowed into Anfield for the 2-0 final-day win against Crystal Palace in May as Champions League qualification was secured with a third-placed finish. It was followed by a guard of honour from his team-mates, a framed Champions Wall and a private farewell, after which Jürgen Klopp summed up his immense contribution to Liverpool Football Club.

"He's been a big part of our lives for so long," he told liverpoolfc.com. "There is nothing I won't miss about him. I will miss the player he is like crazy – highest-quality ability, one of the smartest players I have ever had the privilege to coach. His contribution was off the scale, a manager's dream. But as a person he'll leave just as big a hole.

"A more giving individual you could not wish to meet. Gini is very strong and opinionated, but his motivation is only to help the team – always. His team-mates adored him and respected him in equal measure.

"His smile lit up our workplace. He was a huge part of our beating heart. Farewell Gini, you came, you saw, you won the lot.

"You're a Liverpool legend now and forever."





SHANKS AND ME

Fresh from his star turn at the UEFA European Championships, commentator Clive Tyldesley has a brilliant new book out – and here's an engrossing extract about legendary Liverpool manager Bill Shankly

"Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I can assure you it is much, much more important than that."

It is Bill Shankly's epitaph. And it shouldn't be. That's not how the man that I came to know during his last four years on earth thought about life and death. He loved life above all else.

He loved life even more than he loved football. Just the most human of human beings you can ever imagine. Of all the people that I've met through my career, there is nobody that I would like to have spent more time with than Shanks.

Ask his players and they will tell you that every morning – rain or shine – Bill would eulogise about the joy of being and feeling alive before a ball was kicked in training. The 'life and death' epigram was always accompanied by one of his throaty laughs. It was a joke. The joke of a very serious man.

When I landed on Merseyside in 1977, Bill was already three years retired. He had his own Saturday lunchtime chat show on Radio City, so I saw plenty of him. He was my co-commentator for several games including the 1978 European Cup final at Wembley.

He was alongside me four months later when Liverpool were beaten 2-0 at Nottingham Forest in the first round of the following season's competition. Garry Birtles scored the opening goal in what was his second senior appearance.

"Oh, can you believe it?!' I wailed to a despairing audience back on Merseyside. 'A week ago, we'd never even heard of him, Bill."

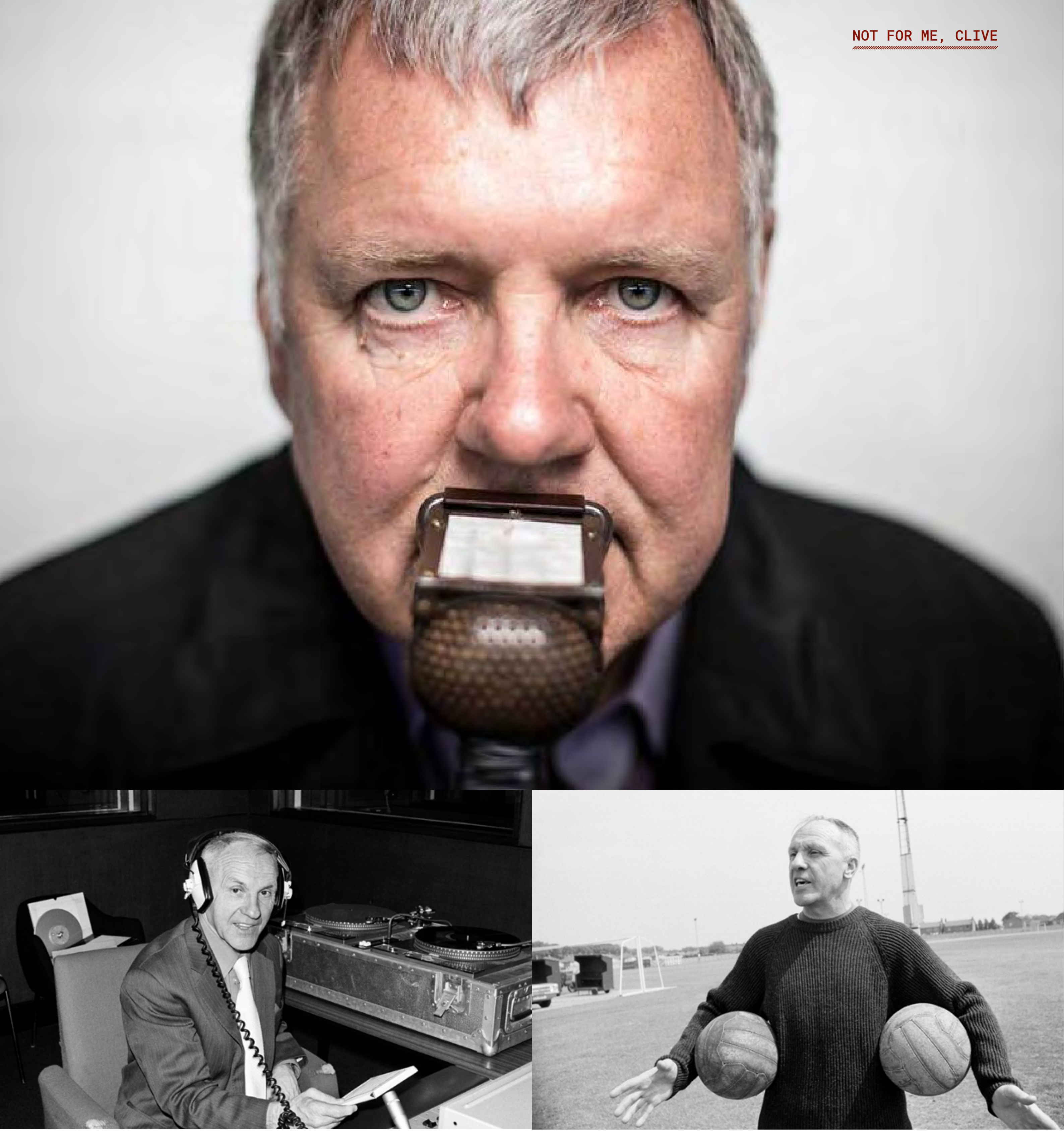
Shanks thought for a second, placed the ribbon microphone onto his top lip and then opened his mouth and his heart. "You've ******* heard of him now!" he roared.

We didn't receive one phone call of complaint. Not one. He had simply spoken for every listening Liverpool fan. I have often thought that commentators should be allowed one 'f-word' per season. Sometimes it's the only adjective that really works in football…

Bill's capacity to speak for Liverpool fans, to think as a Liverpool fan, to care like a Liverpool fan, created the most holy of trinities between manager, team and supporters at Anfield. The perfect match. "It was a kind of marriage. Liverpool was made for me and I was made for Liverpool," he often said…

He felt at home on Merseyside from the day he arrived. Bill spotted similarities between his old backyard and his new one. There were common denominators in the pit villages of Ayrshire and dockland Liverpool in terms of humour, spirit and confidence. "They've got life in them, just like me," he told me in one of our many radio interviews. "They're arrogant, cocky and proud. They are everything I want their team to be."

It takes some front for an outsider to arrive on Merseyside and tell the locals what they're like. I have managed to recover precious copies of some of those Radio City interviews that I did with Bill and they make for hypnotic listening. Every time he says my name



I break out in a silly smile…

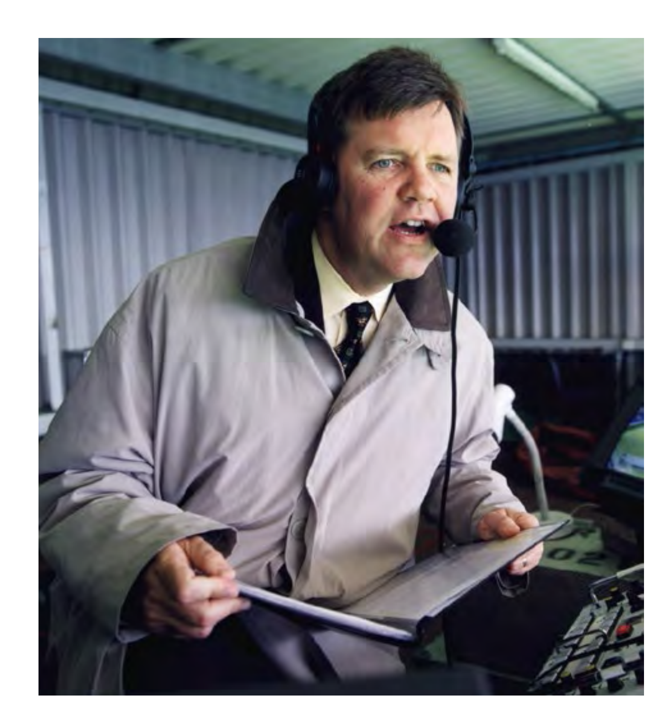
Shanks hated new-fangled jargon. It was one of his recurring rants when I found my latest excuse to visit him at his unremarkable home in Bellefield Avenue adjacent to Everton's training ground. When he was Liverpool manager, he frequently mocked Everton – "the only two teams in Liverpool are Liverpool and Liverpool Reserves" etc – but in his pensionable years he grew ever closer to the old foe on his doorstep and regularly crossed the blue line for a walk and a chat.

And Shanks could chat. I am not naive enough to think that our chats were ever anything more than fillers for spare hours released by his unnecessary retirement. By the time I fell for his charms, the spell had maybe started to wear off with the seasoned reporters and associates that had heard his tales of yore a million times over. I couldn't get enough of them…

Here is another passage from my interview archives. "When I bought Ian St John from Motherwell, he asked me what I wanted him to do. I said, 'I'm going to change your game. Change it completely. At Motherwell, you always passed to an amber shirt'. Because that was their home kit, Clive. Claret-and-amber.

"I told him, 'You're never going to do that again. Not with me. Now, you're going to pass to a red shirt. Always to a red shirt. Pass to any other shirt and you'll be hearing from me. Pass to a red shirt now. Nothing else'.

"When we pass the ball, we pass it like a baton in a relay race. You know, like in an Olympic games. The baton goes round faster



than any of the runners can carry it on their own. The baton is covering the most ground, not the runners. That's what we do with the ball here. We pass it because it can do the running for us. That's why it has to go to a red shirt. The ball is part of our team..."

The monument to Bill Shankly is not the bronze statue outside the Kop with his arms outstretched proclaiming all of the above and more. It's not the gilded Shankly Gates at the other end of Anfield. It is the all-red kit, the 'This is Anfield' sign, the pre-match observance of Gerry Marsden's hymn, all introduced on his watch.

It is the culture, the stamp. It's that "arrogant, cocky and proud" team that he fashioned back then and that all of his successors have been charged with trade- marking and replicating. Shanks started all of this.

People talk about football 'projects' and 'philosophies', but the Bill Shankly project is still going strong sixty years on, the philosophy has barely been tinkered with.

He was one of football's founding fathers.



WIN THE BOOK!



"Football changes everything. It changes how we feel, how we think, how we behave. It turns us into someone else..."

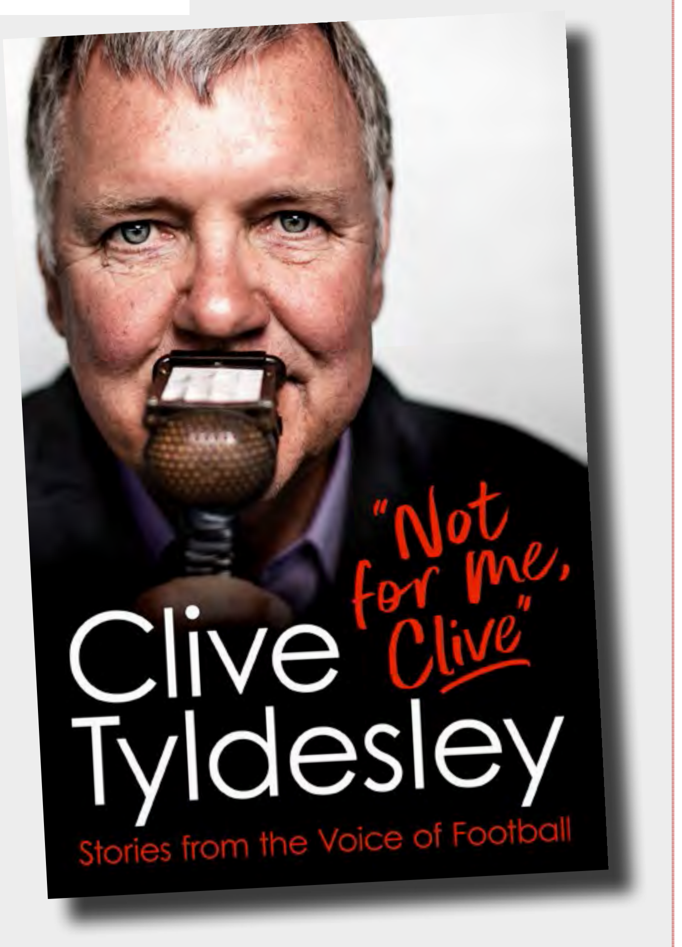
One of the most recognisable voices in sports broadcasting, Clive Tyldesley expertly conveys the magic of football commentary in this crisply-written memoir covering all the big names and bigger moments from the past few decades of 'The Beautiful Game'.

Entitled *Not For Me, Clive,* it's published by Headline and already making plenty of those. Even better, we have five copies to give away for free.

To be in with a chance of winning one, simply tell us:

Who has been Clive's main co-commentating pal during the Euros:
(a) Lee Dixon (b) Emma Hayes (c) Ally McCoist

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LEARNING
L.F.C.

CURVE

The 2020/21 season was one that tested everyone at Under-23s level but one with plenty of positives to build upon

In many ways, Liverpool FC's Under-23s season mirrored that of the senior side.

Injuries to key players at various stages made it a challenging campaign to plot a way through, but ultimately there were many plus points for coach Barry Lewtas (left) to reflect upon.

Lewtas had stepped up from Under-18s manager last summer following Neil Critchley's departure to Blackpool, with whom he went on to win promotion to the Championship after seeing off Northampton Town in the play-off final at Wembley.

One highlight that immediately leaps out was seeing several players go on to make their first-team debuts for the Reds.



GAMES AND GOALS

PREMIER LEAGUE 2

SEPT

13	EVERTON	1-0	Cain
18	Derby County	1-2	Cain
25	Man United	5-3	Clarkson, Woodburn, Bearne 2, Longstaff

OCT

17	Brighton	0-1	
24	CHELSEA	3-1	Williams, Cain, Millar
30	Arsenal	1-0	Clayton

NOV

6	West Ham	4-2	Clayton, Millar, Longstaff, Glatzel
21	SOUTHAMPTON	0-0	
28	MAN CITY	2-7	Clayton, Morton

DEC

12	BLACKBURN	1-2	Van den Berg
19	TOTTENHAM	3-4	Bearne, Millar, Morton

JAN

18	Everton	1-1	Morton
25	MAN UNITED	3-6	Morton, Longstaff, Hardy

FEB

19	Chelsea	3-2	Cain, Stewart, Morton
27	ARSENAL	4-0	Cain 2, Woodburn, Stewart

MAR

7	DERBY COUNTY	1-4	Savage
13	WEST HAM	1-1	Bradley
21	Southampton	2-1	Hardy 2

APR

4	BRIGHTON	3-2	Gallacher, Beck, Hardy
9	Man City	2-3	Hardy 2
19	Blackburn	2-2	Clarkson, Woodburn
23	Tottenham	1-4	Glatzel

MAY

3	LEICESTER CITY	2-2	Clarkson, Woodburn
10	Leicester City	2-0	Woodburn, Gordon

EFL TROPHY (U21s)

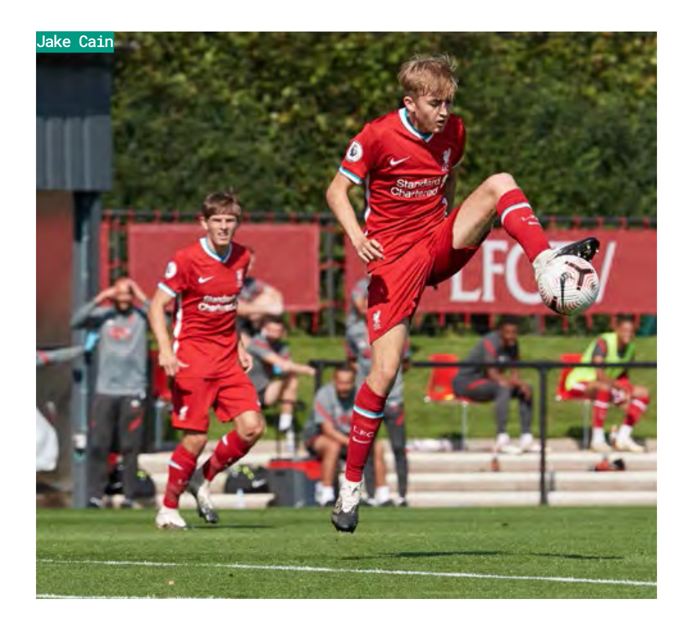
SEPT

22	Wigan Ath	1-6	Clarkson
29	Tranmere	2-3	Cain, Longstaff

NOV

6	Port Vale	2-4	Millar 2

>>


Jake Cain


Rhys Williams

Defender Rhys Williams, fresh from a season on loan at National League North side Kidderminster Harriers, featured regularly in the senior side, making 19 appearances for Jürgen Klopp's team and helping them close out the season in a Champions League berth.

Goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher also enjoyed tastes of first-team action, making a handful of starts, while there were debuts for midfielder Leighton Clarkson and defender Billy Koumetio in the UEFA Champions League tie at FC Midtjylland before Christmas.

Plenty of others sampled the matchday experience with Klopp's side too with places on the bench being awarded to skipper Ben Woodburn, fellow midfielder Jake Cain – the U23s' top scorer with seven goals in league and cup - and goalkeeping trio Vitezslav Jaros, Jakub Ojrzynski and Liam Hughes.

Away from Kirkby several players benefited from loan spells throughout the course of the campaign with Jaros (St Patrick's Athletic), defenders Sepp van den Berg (Preston), Tony Gallacher (Toronto FC), midfielder Woodburn (Blackpool) and forward Liam Millar (Charlton) all learning from the experience of playing football elsewhere.

Millar's move came after he had been shortlisted for the Premier League 2 Player of the Month award in both September and November. Van den Berg will now spend a second season at Deepdale in 2021/22.

The Reds finished their Premier League 2 campaign in mid-table, finishing seventh in the standings after signing off their campaign with a 2-0 win at Leicester City. The win came courtesy of goals from Woodburn and debutant winger Kaide Gordon and the result delighted Lewtas.


Tom Clayton

"It was a great way to end our Premier League 2 campaign," he said. "The lads were brilliant that night and they worked so hard for each other. We played some great football and created a lot of chances. It was great to see Ben get a goal, and it was a really nice moment to see Kaide get a first goal at this level for us."

Gordon, a January recruit from Derby County, went on to score twice as Liverpool U23s concluded their campaign with a 3-1 win in a friendly at League One side AFC Wimbledon at Plough Lane. The match was arranged as a test event by the home side as they welcomed around 2,000 fans, socially distanced, into their new stadium for the first time.

The Dons' midfielder Callum Reilly found a way past Kelleher inside the opening six minutes but forward Joe Hardy equalised for the young Reds and Gordon then made it 2-1 just before the half-hour mark. Gordon struck again in the second half with another excellent finish.

"It was a fantastic atmosphere, the AFC Wimbledon fans were so loud and it felt like the ground was full," said Lewtas after the game. "It was a really good occasion and a really good game and it was a great opportunity for us to come down and play against a strong side.

"I was delighted with the lads and we played really well, and it was a great way to end the campaign at Under-23s level."

Although hit by various injuries across the course of the campaign, the squad developed as the season went on with Lewtas particularly please by a thrilling 3-2 win against Brighton in April which highlighted their character and will to win.

"There were parts of the game I liked and parts of the game I didn't like but I must say, as a group we've talked about playing through tough moments," said the Reds' coach, whose assistant Gary O'Neil left for a first-team role at Bournemouth in February.

WE'VE EITHER WON COMFORTABLY OR NOT WON, BUT WE CAN'T JUST BE END-TO-END, WIN OR LOSE – IT'S SOMETHING WE'VE DISCUSSED A LOT

"There's been a few times I've had to stand here when the game has just gone away from us, and I was really pleased it didn't go that way. We went a goal down, didn't let it go to 2-0 and got back into it. Then I was disappointed we conceded again but we came back and won the game. I think as a group we are beginning to show more maturity in those moments.

"That was a good sign for us to see that game out because I don't think we've done that enough this season in tough games. We've either won comfortably or not won, and that's a problem for these lads because obviously the next step is men's football where it counts.

"We can't just be end-to-end, win or lose – that's not how the game is played. It's something we've discussed a lot."


Billy Koumetio


Ben Woodburn

GAMES AND GOALS

(all competitions)

GAMES: 26, Tom Clayton; 23, Luis Longstaff; 22, Owen Beck; 21, Remi Savage; 20, Jake Cain, Fidel O'Rourke; 18, Elijah Dixon-Bonner; 16, Conor Bradley, Leighton Clarkson; 15, 15, Abdi Sharif, Ben Woodburn; 14, Liam Millar, Tyler Morton; 13, Jack Bearne, Joe Hardy; 11, Sepp van den Berg; 10, Morgan Boyes; 9, Paul Glatzel, Billy Koumetio; 8, Tony Gallacher, Layton Stewart; 7, Jakub Ojrzynski; 6, Caoimhin Kelleher, Matteo Ritaccio; 5, Liam Hughes, Vitezslav Jaros; 4, Marcelo Pitaluga; 3, Jack Walls, Rhys Williams; 2, Yasser Larouci; 1, James Balagizi, Dominic Corness, Kaide Gordon, Sean Wilson, Ben Winterbottom, Max Woltman.

GOALS: 7, Jake Cain; 6, Joe Hardy; 5, Liam Millar, Tyler Morton, Ben Woodburn; 4, Leighton Clarkson; 3, Jack Bearne, Tom Clayton, Luis Longstaff; 2, Paul Glatzel, Layton Stewart; 1, Owen Beck, Conor Bradley, Tony Gallacher, Kaide Gordon, Remi Savage, Sepp van den Berg, Rhys Williams.

PREMIER LEAGUE 2 TABLE 2020/21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Man City	24	17	5	2	79	30	49	56
Chelsea	24	12	6	6	50	36	14	42
Tottenham	24	11	5	8	45	44	1	38
Blackburn	24	10	7	7	48	41	7	37
Everton	24	10	6	8	44	28	16	36
Derby C	24	11	3	10	43	49	-6	36
Liverpool	**24**	**10**	**5**	**9**	**48**	**50**	**-2**	**35**
Man United	24	10	4	10	58	59	-1	34
Brighton	24	7	9	8	36	42	-6	30
Arsenal	24	6	8	10	37	43	-6	26
West Ham	24	6	6	12	32	48	-16	24
Leicester	24	6	4	14	41	55	-14	22
Southampton	24	4	4	16	29	65	-36	16



>>

The last couple of months of the campaign saw a handful of players sign new contracts with the club. Striker Layton Stewart had been in prolific form before damaging his ACL in a game against West Ham and he has been rewarded for his efforts with a fresh deal, while fellow forward Fidel O'Rourke has also put pen to paper on extended terms.

Versatile defender/holding midfielder Tom Clayton made the most appearances among the Under-23s in 2020/21 and was the Reds' only ever-present in Premier League 2. He has signed another contract as has midfielder Matteo Ritaccio and keeper Liam Hughes.

Liam Coyle, Joe Hardy, Abdi Sharif and Jack Walls have left the Reds this summer upon the expiry of their terms, while contract offers were made to defenders Yasser Larouci and Remi Savage but the pair decided to seek fresh challenges elsewhere.


Liam Millar


Sepp van den Berg



LEWIS AT LIVI

Academy defender Adam Lewis has agreed a season-long loan move to Scottish Premiership side Livingston for 2021/22.

The 21-year-old left-back will link up with David Martindale's side, who finished sixth in Scotland's top-flight last season.

Elsewhere, striker Paul Glatzel has joined Tranmere Rovers on loan for the 2021/22 season. The 20-year-old, who has been sidelined with injuries for much of the past two seasons, moves to Micky Mellon's side hoping to gain added experience in League Two.

Meanwhile, the Reds' U21s will face Port Vale, Rochdale and Bolton in the group stages of the 2021/22 Papa John's Trophy.



TAKE FIVE

With the new FA Women's Championship season set to kick off on 28 August, manager Matt Beard introduces Liverpool FC Women's new recruits

















Matt Beard believes he now has the right blend in his squad to help the Reds regain their place in the upper echelon of the women's game.

After seeing five of the group move on at the end of last season, the returning Liverpool boss has now brought in a handful of players who all have experience of the FA Women's Super League. He hopes they will add know-how and extra options to his squad who started their pre-season work at the Solar Campus in Wallasey during the last week of June

"We worked hard in this recruitment process," he explains. "I'm delighted to welcome all the girls to the club and we have just been really excited just to get going, welcoming back the current group and the new signings and just getting to work.

"I think we've added top-division quality to an already-good squad. The biggest thing for me with this recruitment process was to create competition for places which will drive up the standards in training.



"We are still looking to maybe bring in one or two more as well to try and boost the numbers and continue with that competition, but we're really excited and I feel that we are building a good squad here.

"It's a squad that knows the WSL and obviously a lot of the girls have experience of the Championship last year too. Hopefully that means we've got the blend right and we've got the balance right within the team now which will give us the best opportunity to get out of this division."

LEANNE KIERNAN



Squad no: 9
Position: forward
Birthplace: Bailieborough, Ireland
Age: 22
Signed from: West Ham United
International career: 20 caps, 4 goals for Republic of Ireland

MATT SAYS: "Leanne's a versatile forward. She is very quick and she can score goals, not only from inside the box but outside the box too. She is an infectious character as well, she's got a great personality and she's funny.

"But one of the biggest traits with Leanne is her work-rate and the way she conducts herself, which is something that I think we need in this league and I'm excited to see what she can do.

"I signed her at West Ham when she was 18 years old and it was her first time being away from home. She's grown up a lot over those three years and I think this is a good move for us and it's a good move for Leanne.







"As I say, I'm looking forward to seeing what she can produce this year."

DID YOU KNOW? Leanne broke through at Shelbourne as a teenager and helped the Dublin club win the Women's National League in 2016. She was also named as Young Player of the Year for that season.

YANA DANIELS

Squad no: 20
Position: winger/forward
Birthplace: Knesselare, Belgium
Age: 29
Signed from: Bristol City
International career: 44 caps, 7 goals for Belgium

MATT SAYS: "First and foremost, Yana's a great player. She is a little bit different to what we have in the front positions at the moment.

"I felt we had a lot of players who were very similar in the wide positions but Yana can come in off the line, she's good in the air and she is a very technically gifted football player and she can create and score goals.

"I also think this is a unique football club and I feel Yana's experience of being here before and understanding the brand and also the pressures of what it means to be a player for Liverpool Football Club is important. That is something else that we took into consideration when we were looking at her.

"I remember in one of my first conversations with her, I was talking about consistency and she was outstanding for me at Bristol. She never missed a minute of any game and she was excellent.

"She's a great person as well, a really, really good person and that's something that I really love about her too."

DID YOU KNOW? Yana's previous jobs included working in a zoo and a spell as a bus driver. She made 21 appearances during her first spell with the Reds, scoring once, in a 5-2 home defeat of Bristol City in April 2019.

JASMINE MATTHEWS

Squad no: 6
Position: defender/midfielder
Birthplace: Truro, England
Age: 28
Signed from: Bristol City
International career: Capped by England U17s, U19s and U23s

MATT SAYS: "Jas is a very, very good footballer. She surprised me. She reads the game really well, technically she's gifted, she can pass a ball, she's got great vision and she's versatile too and can play as a centre-back or in central midfield.

"It was a big blow when I lost her to injury at Bristol to be perfectly honest. It was a big, big blow and left a big void to try and fill.

"Again, similar to Yana, she knows this football club and she's a great person. She's going to be a great asset to the squad."

DID YOU KNOW?
Like Yana, Jasmine was originally signed for Liverpool by Neil Redfearn in the summer of 2018. She played 14 games for the Reds in a season curtailed by injury. She had been part of the Bristol team that reached the quarter-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League in 2014/15.

MEGAN CAMPBELL

Squad no: 28
Position: defender
Birthplace: Drogheda, Ireland
Age: 28
Signed from: Manchester City
International career: 42 caps, 3 goals for Republic of Ireland



MATT SAYS: "Megs offers us a bit of versatility in that she can play centre back and left-back and her long throw is







well documented and known in the game. With players like Furney (midfielder Rachel Furness) in our team, it will be a good weapon for us.

"Both myself and the analysts have prepared for her long-throws as an opponent in the past and it was a nightmare! It's another way of scoring a goal for us. It's effectively another set-piece and a lot of goals in the women's game come from set-plays or transitions, so to have that as another way to try and break a team down or to create a goalscoring opportunity is going to be great for us.

"She's a fantastic footballer who has been a bit unlucky with her injuries over the last year or so and I think it just fits for us and it fits for her. I'm really excited for her to get back to doing what she loves and playing on the pitch and she's another player that knows how to win things with being involved in a club that's been challenging at Man City.

"Her experience is going to be valuable for us this year going into this campaign and in trying to meet our targets."

DID YOU KNOW?

Megan is a granddaughter of The Dubliners' guitarist Eamonn Campbell. Her long throw-in ability has seen her dubbed as the Rory Delap of the women's game!

CARLA HUMPHREYS



Squad no: 17
Position: midfielder
Birthplace: Brampton, England
Age: 24
Signed from: Bristol City
International career: Capped by England U15s, U17s, U19s, U20s and U23s



MATT SAYS: "Carla is another talented player. She's very good in tight spaces, she's got a great football brain and sees pictures that a lot of people don't.

"Especially if we're playing against teams in a block, she is going to be valuable for us in those tight spaces and her ability to create goalscoring opportunities.

"Again she offers a little bit of versatility as she can play wide, she can play in the eight role or in the 10, so she's going to be another good addition to the team."

DID YOU KNOW?

Carla scored her first goal for Bristol City in a 2-0 win over the Reds in a pre-season friendly at Filton in September 2017. Like team-mate Leighanne Robe, she was born in Cambridgeshire and came through the youth system at Arsenal.

Words: William Hughes

JUL / AUG

WHAT'S ON





COUNTDOWN BEGINS

Jürgen Klopp welcomed members of his Liverpool FC squad, including new recruit Ibrahima Konate, to the AXA Training Centre on 12 July to begin their pre-season preparations.

Those players not involved in international tournaments this summer reported for duty and will now be putting in the hard yards as the clock ticks down to the eagerly-awaited Premier League opener against promoted Norwich City at Carrow Road on Saturday 14 August.

The lads will undergo rigorous testing before embarking on a month-long build-up to league action with those who starred at the Euros and Copa America given a break before returning ahead of the new campaign.

At the time of going to press, pre-season fixtures details were still to be confirmed so visit liverpoolfc.com where the games will be announced in due course.

To check out the Reds' provisional fixture list for 2020/21, turn to page 96.

JUL / AUG

WHAT'S ON



OLYMPIC DREAMS

Liverpool FC Women's Meikayla Moore will be going for gold with New Zealand at the delayed Olympic Games in Japan.

The women's football competition will take place between 23 July and 6 August with the Reds centre-back named in the Football Ferns squad for the tournament.

New Zealand kick-off their campaign against Australia in Tokyo on 21 July before moving to Saitama to play the USA on 24 July. Their final group game comes against Sweden in Rifu on 27 July.

The top two nations in each of the three groups, along with the two best third-placed sides, will progress to the quarter-finals on 30 July. The semis are scheduled for 2 August and the Tokyo final on 6 August.

Moore, 25, tweeted: "An extremely proud moment for myself and my family to be attending my second Olympic Games with the @nzfootballferns. After what has been a crazy period of uncertainty for all, the team and I cannot wait to get to Tokyo and play on the world stage to show what I can bring individually and with my Fernies."

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

ANNIVERSARIES

4 years since Andy Robertson signed from Hull City on 21 July
10 years ago since Jordan Henderson first played for LFC in a friendly at Hull City on 23 July
47 years since Ray Kennedy joined from Arsenal on 12 July
47 years since Bill Shankly announced his shock resignation on 12 July
55 years since Roger Hunt helped England become World Cup winners on 30 July
60 years since Ron Yeats signed from Dundee United on 22 July
83 years since Billy Liddell joined from Lochgelly Violet on 27 July
125 years since Tom Watson was appointed Liverpool manager on 25 July

And it's one year since Liverpool lifted the Premier League title on 22 July 2020...

Jordan Henderson finally got his hands on the Premier League trophy after the Reds signed off their season at Anfield with a memorable 5-3 win over Chelsea.

Henderson was presented with the silverware by Reds legend Sir Kenny Dalglish on a special podium built on the Kop after Jürgen Klopp's side made it three full unbeaten Premier League seasons on home soil.

Naby Keita broke the deadlock with a rising 25-yard drive that thundered in off the bar and the Reds added further first-half goals through a fine Trent Alexander-Arnold free-kick and Georginio Wijnaldum's powerful strike.

Olivier Giroud pulled one back on the stroke of half-time but Chelsea's hopes of a comeback appeared to be snuffed out 10 minutes after the break, when Roberto Firmino headed in his first league goal of the season at Anfield from Alexander-Arnold's centre.

Substitute Christian Pulisic then had a dramatic impact as he sparked a fightback, creating a goal for Tammy Abraham then scoring another himself as an entertaining game took an unexpected turn.

But to the sound of fireworks being let off outside Anfield, the champions added a fifth when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain turned in Andy Robertson's cross with six minutes left.

And then it was time for the ceremony Liverpool had waited three decades to enjoy – albeit in the somewhat surreal surroundings of a virtually empty stadium.

"We've been waiting a long time," said Henderson after lifting the silverware. "Walking up there was amazing. The lads deserved the moment and thankfully the families were watching. To crown it off like that was really special."





BIRTHDAYS

Craig Bellamy 42 on 13 July
Vegard Heggem 46 on 13 July
Peter Cormack 75 on 17 July
Roger Hunt 83 on 20 July
Mike Marsh 52 on 21 July
Dirk Kuyt 41 on 22 July
Tony Gallacher 22 on 23 July
Vitezslav Jaros 20 on 23 July
Ray Kennedy 70 on 28 July
Jim Beglin 58 on 29 July
Mark Wright 58 on 1 August
John Wark 64 on 4 August




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LFC NIKE JUNIOR AWAY STADIUM JERSEY 21/22
£54.95

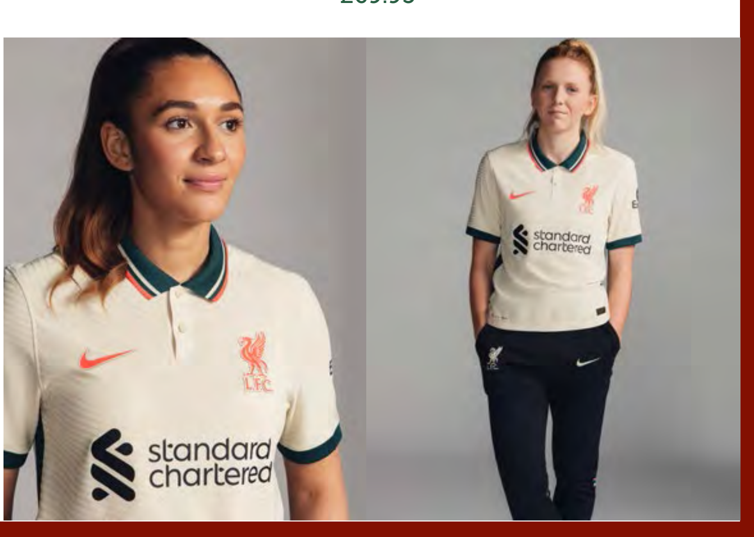


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LFC NIKE BABY AWAY KIT 21/22
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FIXTURES 2021/22

		SCORE	TV	SCORERS
AUGUST				
Sat 14	Norwich City (A, 5.30pm)		Sky	
Sat 21	**Burnley (H, 12.30pm)**		**BT**	
Sat 28	Chelsea (H, 5.30pm)		Sky	
SEPTEMBER				
Sun 12	Leeds United (A, 4.30pm)		Sky	
Tue 14/Wed 15	UCL Matchday One			
Sat 18	**Crystal Palace (H)**			
Wed 22	Carabao Cup 3			
Sat 25	Brentford (A, 5.30pm)		Sky	
Tue 28/Wed 29	UCL Matchday Two			
OCTOBER				
Sat 2	**Manchester City (H)**			
Sat 16	Watford (A)			
Tue 19/Wed 20	UCL Matchday Three			
Sat 23	Manchester United (A)			
Wed 27	Carabao Cup 4			
Sat 30	**Brighton & Hove Albion (H)**			
NOVEMBER				
Tue 2/Wed 3	UCL Matchday Four			
Sat 6	West Ham United (A)			
Sat 20	**Arsenal (H)**			
Tue 23/Wed 24	UCL Matchday Five			
Sat 27	**Southampton (H)**			
Tue 30	Everton (A)			
DECEMBER				
Sat 4	Wolverhampton Wanderers (A)			
Tue 7/Wed 8	UCL Matchday Six			
Sat 11	**Aston Villa (H)**			
Wed 15	**Newcastle United (H)**			
Sat 18	Tottenham Hotspur (A)			
Wed 22	Carabao Cup 5			
Sun 26	**Leeds United (H)**			
Tue 28	Leicester City (A)			
JANUARY				
Sat 1	Chelsea (A)			
Wed 5	Carabao Cup S-F 1			
Sat 8	Emirates FA Cup 3			
Wed 22	Carabao Cup S-F 2			
Sat 15	**Brentford (H)**			
Sat 22	Crystal Palace (A)			
FEBRUARY				
Sat 5	Emirates FA Cup 4			
Wed 9	**Leicester City (H)**			
Sat 12	Burnley (A)			
Tue 15/Wed 16	UCL Ro16 1			
Sat 19	**Norwich City (H)**			
Tue 22/Wed 23	UCL Ro16 1			
Sat 26	Arsenal (A)			
Sun 27	Carabao Cup Final			
MARCH				
Wed 2	Emirates FA Cup 5			
Sat 5	**West Ham United (H)**			
Tue 8/Wed 9	UCL Ro16 2			
Sat 12	Brighton & Hove Albion (A)			
Tue 15/Wed 16	UCL Ro16 2			
Sat 19	**Manchester United (H)**			
Sat 19	Emirates FA Cup 6			
APRIL				
Sat 2	**Watford (H)**			
Tue 5/Wed 6	UCL Q-F 1			
Sat 9	Manchester City (A)			
Tue 12/Wed 13	UCL Q-F 2			
Sat 16	Aston Villa (A)			
Sat 16	Emirates FA Cup S-F			
Sat 23	**Everton (H)**			
Tue 26/Wed 27	UCL S-F 1			
Sat 30	Newcastle United (A)			
MAY				
Tue 3/Wed 4	UCL S-F 2			
Sat 7	**Tottenham Hotspur (H)**			
Sat 14	Emirates FA Cup Final			
Sun 15	Southampton (A)			
Sun 22	**Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)**			
Sat 28	UCL Final			

All fixtures are subject to change.



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RAY OF LIGHT

12 July marks 47 years since Ray Kennedy joined Liverpool - an arrival slightly overshadowed by the fact that Bill Shankly resigned as manager on the same day! “Maybe it will be said that one of the last things I did at this club was to sign a great new player,” Shanks said of his final recruit. Indeed! Bob Paisley converted him from fearless forward to majestic midfielder and he won 11 major honours with LFC including five league championships and three European Cups!

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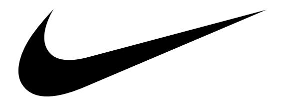
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